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Encountering Statues: Object Oriented Ontology And The Figure In A Sculptural Practice

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ENCOUNTERING STATUES:
OBJECT ORIENTED ONTOLOGY AND THE FIGURE IN A
SCULPTURAL PRACTICE

By

Lisa Osborn

A thesis submitted to Plymouth University in partial fulfilment for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Art, Design and Architecture

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ABSTRACT

Encountering Statues: Object Oriented Ontology and the Figure In a Sculptural Practice

Lisa Osborn

This study reappraises the role and value of statues (i.e. the figure as sculpture) in order to determine what happens when we encounter these objects. The consideration and construction of statues in my studio practice has generated specific insights into statues as person-shaped objects and into our encounter with these objects. From the perspective of a practice making statues this study addresses how, through the encounter, statues both stimulate and obscure our perceptions of them as objects.

My practitioner's understanding of statues is articulated and enlarged by developing methods which allowed me to gain an expanded perspective of my practice, through data collected from conversations about statues, and via a subsequent diffractive dialogue with concepts gleaned from other disciplines.

This research process has revealed specific characteristics of the encounter, and of statues themselves, that have been excluded or obscured by familiar assumptions and theories, such as a tacit consideration of statues that allows us to be unsettled by their nudity, or the role touch plays in considering statues, and ultimately the history of the object itself.

These findings are considered through a sustained engagement with Object Oriented Ontology (after Harman). Through this process, my initial findings are subsequently expanded and further enhance a re-conception of the encounter and of statues as objects. Finally, I argue for the importance of considering this reappraisal of the role the encounter with statues could play in revealing and reframing our relations with objects more generally.

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Acknowledgements

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This work is respectfully dedicated to C. Stigliano.

Author's Declaration and Word Count

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

A programme of advanced study was undertaken, which included attendance at seven residencies through Transart Institute.

Word count of main body of thesis: 50,156.

Signed _____
Lisa B. Osborn

Date 4/2018

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Artwork by author
made use of in this study

Image 1: Corpse and Transi (2015)

'The object I made had a head and hands a head and hands a head and hands that were my form and the boots were ones I had worn out, and yet it was not me.' (p. 83)





Image 2: *Vieilles Dames #6*, 2013 7.5'X 3' (2.3m) Ceramic, steel, slip, paint. (p. 66 and 101) (Photo: L Ball)



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Image 21: *Adonis*, Detail, 1994 (Photos: J Horner)

Image 22: Detail of MFA Exhibition, 1995





Image 23: Untitled (Soft Serve Man), 1996, Ceramic, 80" (Photo: J Horner)



Image 24: Untitled (Bride) 1996 (Photo: J Horner)



Image 25: Untitled (*Belly*), 1997 (Photo: J Horner)



Image 26: Untitled (Chuck Waist), 1997, 86" (Photo: J Horner)



Image 27:Untitled (*Both Kids*) 2000, Ceramic, 80" (Photo: J Horner)



Image 28: Untitled (*Turning Madonna*), 2000, 84" (Photo: J Horner)



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(Photos: J Horner)



Image 31: Exhibition detail, 2012

Image 32: Exhibition detail, 2012





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Detail from *Obsession* exhibition, 2015. (p186)

VIDEOS

All videos are on the Wordpress site:

<https://statues.blog/> The password is **statues**

Each video can be reached quickly by using the QR code beside the image. QR code readers are often accessed through the camera app on a smart phone by looking at the code through the camera.

(QR code readers are available for free through the app store. Search for QR code reader)



Video 1: Conversation #1. (p. 144)



<https://statues.blog/2017/12/09/conversations-about-statues/>



Video 2: Conversation #2. (p. 144)



<https://statues.blog/2017/12/09/conversations-about-statues/>

The password is **statues**



Video 3: Pots and statues. (p. 144)

This video is a detail. On the left side of the woman speaking, I show a man how like pots my statues are like pots.



<https://statues.blog/2017/12/09/conversations-about-statues/>

The password is **statues**



Video 4: Foam movie. (p 151)



<https://statues.blog/2017/12/11/berlin-foam-project/>

The password is **statues**



Video 5: Studio movie. (p. 153)



<https://statues.blog/2018/03/22/studio-movie/>

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Video 6: Walking with statues.



<https://statues.blog/2017/12/10/walking-with-statues/>

The password is **statues**



Video 7: Walking man. (p 164)



<https://statues.blog/2017/12/07/giacometti-project/>

The password is **statues**



Video 8: Chicken and a lady. (p 166)



<https://statues.blog/2018/02/27/old-work/>

The password is **statues**



Video 9: Fire burns cotton.



<https://statues.blog/2017/12/07/fire-burns-cotton/>

The password is **statues**



Video 10: Baby Heads. (p 188)



<https://statues.blog/2018/04/15/the-baby-heads-project/>

The password is **statues**

INTRODUCTION

[Artists] who deny themselves the representation of life and limit their language to purely abstract forms, are depriving themselves of the possibility of provoking more than an aesthetic emotion.
(Freud, 1996, p.219)

I first read Lucian Freud's suggestion of '*provoking more*' twenty-five years ago, and copied it at the bottom of my artist statements. I was already focused on the figure in my work, but what I found in Freud's essay was confirmation of my experience that the figure as a subject activated additional layers of consequence to an encounter with art, although not why that was so.

Accordingly, this study has taken the form of an examination of statues as art objects from the perspective of a studio practice concerned with the figure. The central question specifically considered has been, *what happens when we encounter a statue?* Addressing this question has been led by my particular experience of that encounter through studio practice, which is also its origin, and how others speak about their encounters. In order to address the *more* that Lucian Freud suggested is provoked when we encounter an art object in human form: statues and the encounter, once defined, are brought into dialogue with Object Oriented Ontology as a method to indicate how, through our encounter, statues can be made use of as a philosophical actant.

Freud goes on to argue that in order to be moved, we cannot merely be reminded of life by a copy of life, the work 'must acquire a life of its own, precisely in order to reflect life' (Freud, 1996, p.220). In short, interpreting life in a figure rather than copying life increases the life in the figure. This was further verification of my experience. I was making alterations to my figures that seemed *necessary*. I used the term *emotional anatomy* to speak about these adjustments. My approach to the figure is to subtly alter and reform anatomy—with attentiveness to human structure—acknowledging and considering, rather than copying, the body. This study has included an articulation of an approach to the human figure that makes use of anatomy to signal how life feels rather than to replicate the body.

The significance of our encounters with statues is often exhibited in the way we speak about them, and I have documented and analysed this way of speaking in others and myself as part of this study. My curiosity is further stimulated by the position the figure has come to inhabit in contemporary art, which I will expand on in this chapter. This leads me to make a distinction (for the purposes of this study) between figure sculpture that is a copy of a person's body, and sculpture that is concerned with and informed by the structure of the body.

Although not articulated until performing this research, the question: *What happens when we encounter a statue?* has been a part of my practice for decades. The stimulus and capacity to address this concern through an established practice has come through the refining of this question, in tandem

with determining methods for articulating practice as research, and applying these insights to work made toward this study. I completed eighteen life scale figures, and twenty smaller figures and objects during this study, which is not an unusual number, but it has been the adjustment of applying expressed methods of research to practice that has allowed this work to inform, enlarge, and articulate my encounter with statues.

This exploration through practice was achieved using a methodology designed to acknowledge and facilitate my particular practice as a means to conduct and document research. This approach enabled methods already in place in my practice to be expressed and made use of, toward appropriately revised and articulated goals. These methods were used to both draw theory—or concepts from outside my practice—into practice and make use of them there, and to articulate the results. My methods were further expanded and enhanced through analysis of recorded documentation of my encounters with statues in the studio, as well as the encounters of others, manifested through conversation and writing on the subject of statues.

Background

Going beyond the above quotation from Lucian Freud, I can locate the origins of this study, in embryonic form, in my artist statements over the past twenty-five years. A statement from 1995 expresses how desire and an eccentric longing had informed my work. I began by recounting how, at nine years old, I had tried to will a homemade doll to respond:

I yearned, wished, willed, stared-at-pulling-the-universe-up-through-my-feet-and-out-my-eyes this doll to life. She remained a doll, unresponsive, ungrateful, in a world unavailable to me.

In the same statement I described how, at eleven I was engulfed in an obsession for a horse that turned out to be much too big for me to control, although I rode him anyway. Connecting that desire to my work, I wrote that:

My work comes from this same big desire or compulsion. It is overwhelming and I have very little power over it. I will my figures to life and I feel betrayed and annoyed when they do not climb out of the kiln on their own, and live. I begin another though they are oblivious and unmindful of me.

This writing suggests that I experienced my relations with the doll and statues as controlled by wilful objects, and not specifically by me. I add here that I did not, and have not, ever actually wanted my work to *live*, although this was effective shorthand to describe vague and illogical expectations about my work in the world once it was completed.

It is curious to have felt expectation of these figures, to feel something akin to what existential philosopher Emmanuel Levinas explains as the summons implicit in the approach of the other, or the encounter, and to receive no response. Finally understanding this summons and how Levinas defines it is where this study took hold. While I will revisit Levinas in greater depth in chapter four, here, I want to discuss his influence on this study in terms of

defining the encounter with statues. Levinas writes that the other defines us,¹ 'the face speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation incommensurate with a power exercised' (Levinas, 2011, p.198).² University of Montreal Professor of Philosophy Bettina Bergo summarizing Levinas' *call* of the other on us, writing that the other 'does not even have to utter words in order for me to feel the summons implicit in his approach' (Bergo, 2015). It is Levinas' concept of the other and how we encounter relations that led me to choose Object Oriented Ontology as a means for discussing the encounter and objects. Levinas description of the *idea of the other* resonated (for me) with what Graham Harman describes as the sensual object. In these terms, Levinas says we are wrong to ever think we know the *real* other. It is only our idea of the other or our *sensual* other—in Harman's terms—which we respond to. When we think we know the other and judge accordingly, we cut off the flow (that is what life is about for Levinas) between us.

I have experienced the impression that the lack of response from an object shaped like a person is a subtle rebuff. In an article titled, *Acts Of Stillness*:

¹ Martin Buber also writes about the encounter as a meeting between either *I* and *thou*, or *I* and *it*:

'The one primary word is the combination I–Thou. The other primary word is the combination I–It; wherein, without a change in the primary word, one of the words He and She can replace It. Hence the I of man is also twofold. For the I of the primary word I–Thou is a different I from that of the primary word I–It.'

'(Buber, Martin, *I and Thou*, Trans. Smith (Kindle Locations 125-129 OR Part one; 4, 5, 6, and 7) Buber, like Levinas argues that our lives are meaningful through our relationships. That supposing thou to be an it is to merely experience and not to acknowledge *a living relationship*.

² Similarly, Philosopher Paul Ricoeur quotes Levinas when he discusses the implied responsibility the self owes the other, that there is 'no self without another who summons it to responsibility' (Ricoeur, 1992, p.187).

Statues, Performativity, And Passive Resistance, art historian David Getsy assesses ‘the effects of statues acting on us by standing there, motionless’ (Getsy, 2014, p.2). This stillness is one of several defining characteristics of statues. We can easily manage this kind of snub from a doll or statue (i.e. a person shaped object), but it is rare to feel this passive resistance from similar things, such as a marble arch, a vase, or a painting.

When I was even younger, perhaps four years old, I began to adore the life-sized bust of a girl, attributed to Clodion³. (See Figure 1, page 231). She sat on a low table, in front of a mirror in a hall at my grandmother’s house.⁴ I thought this girl to be beautiful and I felt she was kind to me, though she was not a portrait of anyone I knew. I remember feeling pleasure at finding her, every time I returned to the hall, right where she should be. She allowed me to be with her, look at her, to study her. She was, I thought, what I wanted to be. I admired her. She seemed lovely, deep and knowing. I resolved that as I grew up I would be like her, I was grateful and I admired her.

³ *Cloudion* (Claude Michel) was the ultimate French 18th century rococo sculptor. (I do not know if the bust is a real Clodion, but it is signed *C. MICHEL*)

⁴ My grandmother died in 1983. The bust was packed away when my father’s sister inherited the house, although the hall with the low table and mirror remained. For over 30 years, as I attended parties or visited my aunt I would pass the table and think of my lost “friend.” Recently, my brothers and I divided my father’s “things” from a storage unit. I chose an unopened, very heavy, wooden box without really knowing what was inside. It did turn out to contain the bust. We are reunited, although what I find pretty, deep, and wise seems to have altered for me.

Again, this 'girl' is a marble, rococo-style bust, which, as a form, is only a head and upper part of the chest. That projection, of how I wanted to model myself, how I wanted to appear to others, the gratitude I felt, and what I wanted to elicit in others, was a series of complex feelings for a head and shoulders to evoke in a child. I have recently been reunited with the bust. It is evident that I was lonely and in need of friendship and guidance as a child, as I find resolve of neither in the bust today.

Following on this, Getsy defines statues as 'a three-dimensional figurative image [. . . that] both depicts a body in space and is a body-in-space' (Getsy, 2014, p.2). What is implied by Getsy's definition is the subtle complexity of an object that is concurrently portraying and being. This dual nature is defined through indicating that statues depict a body-in-space and are objects shaped like a body-in-space at the same time. It is a real object shaped like a person but not a real person, suggesting a third or dual position for statues.

Getsy points to a statue as present, as an object, although it is 'an image of something not actually present, and perhaps never seen in everyday life' (p.2). In this Getsy both articulates and illustrates a key issue of consideration when addressing statues. The encounter is between a person (active viewer) and a person shaped object (passive statue), and is positioned in terms of a physical object that both is and is not present. Therefore, in the encounter with statues it

is only the form that provides the something that is not present.⁵ This is the revealing moment in the encounter with a statue. The contrast of knowing it is not real and yet that it is a real object at the same time.

That Getsy considers ‘the sculptural encounter as a theatre of power relations between active viewers and passive statues’ (Getsy, 2014, p.1), assumes something about both relations and statues, and those assumptions illustrate a characteristic of the encounter this study addresses. It is my encounter with statues through practice that presents me with the particular perspective on and evidence about statues that informs the desire to somewhat amend Getsy’s definition, and points to the subtle and historical iconoclasm—here meaning literally to invest and possibly condemn statues with significance, or to see them as merely a lesser form of ourselves—that Getsy unintentionally indicates.

I have positioned iconoclasm in this study as a fundamental unease with the graven image that influences our encounter by veiling the actual object. It is the conceptual denial or literal destruction of an image, in this case a statue. A kind of iconoclasm is illustrated in Baudrillard’s description of the simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1994, pp.3-7).⁶ Baudrillard writes that the image is the murderer

⁵ As I indicate in chapter one, this is repeated somewhat in Heidegger in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger makes the point, important to this study, that the ‘work of art is still something else over and out of the *thingly* aspect. This other that is in it makes up the artistic’ (Heidegger, 2006, p.4).

⁶ I do not follow Baudrillard further in his argument that the ‘something else’ the simulacrum indicates, finally and ironically, replaces reality. In the essay *Object-Oriented Seduction: Baudrillard Reconsidered* (Harman, 2016), Graham Harman explores Baudrillard and explains

of the real. For example, he suggests that iconoclasts destroy images of God because of a 'metaphysical despair that came from the idea that the images didn't conceal anything at all' (Baudrillard, 1994, 5). While the danger of the simulacrum is a complex discussion, briefly stated the image becomes shorthand for something no longer based in reality, it distorts or it replaces reality. This suggests the necessity of situating iconoclasm for this study. First, statues are partly an image of something not real and yet are real. The presence of the real object (statue) is obviously fundamental to my practice, but it is in an effort to keep a focus on the real object beyond the studio that iconoclasm is framed for this study. I suggest a further definition of iconoclasm for use here that identifies the dismissal or negation of the object through having not fully addressed what happens in the encounter. Iconoclasm here suggests an incomplete or disjointed appraisal of the object encountered.

My evaluation or estimation of statues and my questions about the encounter come through fluency in the concepts, materials, and skills required to craft and to consider the figure or (my particular kind of) statues through my practice. This fluency has offered me a specific view of the nature of an object shaped like a person, and the way we speak about or appear to consider what happens

that his interest in Baudrillard's idea of the simulacrum is found 'in the new compound real made up of the simulacrum and its admirer, who is seduced by it' (Harman, 2016 p. 135). Seduction versus desire plays a role in defining the sensual object of OOO. The sensual object is not withdrawn as is the real object. Harman writes: 'But for OOO, the inwardness of things can never be brought to light, and thus the reality to be had is not the unattainable one hidden behind the sensual waterfall or rose but the new compound reality of the beholder seduced by these objects plus the objects themselves' (Harman, 2016, 134). The simulacrum is similar to the sensual object, it is as deep or as meaningful as we allow it to be, it is the real object, in the case of this study a statue, which is an unfathomable and significant reality. OOO and Harman are revisited in chapter four.

when we encounter objects shaped like people. Figurative sculpture is often judged in comparison to our body, or as a lesser imitation of us. My figures are intentionally distorted in order to impart without the veiling of direct comparison. My figures remain both real and not real, openly offering that other or third option. It is specifically through practice that I have authority to undertake this study. Statues, as objects, occupy space and are real things, although they are not real people. A statue may, however, be a portrait of a real person, or the personification of an ideal. A statue is a real object that indicates a reality, but is not a real person or ideal. This is where this study begins.

Considered generally, statues occupy an ambiguous position in relation to the broader fields of Contemporary Art. The statue, as an art form, is regularly welcomed back into the fold without ever quite holding its position there. As an example of this tenuous grip, the final sentence of each of the five essays contributed by contemporary art critics, gallery directors, and art historians for the 2014 *The Human Factor* exhibition at the Southbank Centre all present a similar quality. Their common tone is at odds with the definitive heralding of the figure (back) into the arena of contemporary art that this exhibit seemed to suggest was imminent.

The final sentence of Hayward Gallery director Ralph Rugoff's introductory article for the catalogue reads as follows:

The sculptures in *The Human Factor*, on the other hand, involve us in working through our cultural memory of the figure in order to reach an understanding of how this most familiar form — once regarded as an artistic anachronism — can still be reconfigured in ways that enhance our questioning and our understanding of our present time. (Rugoff, 2014, p.18)

Similarly, the Director of Tate Britain, Penelope Curtis, writes in her essay

Standing Sculpture at the Turn of The Century: Exchange Values and

Metamorphoses:

This nearly haptic exchange between figure and ground, between body and material, unites an apparently eclectic range of artwork, and discourages us from making any simple conclusions about figurative sculpture in the early twenty-first century, other than to accept that it is being as abstract as it is figurative. (2014, p.24)

While in *Post-Abstract and Data-Mapped; The Conditions of*

Contemporary Figure Sculpture art critic Martin Herbert states that:

If where we are now has never before had so much then in it, and nor, perhaps, so much scary and thrilling futurity, we'll see it in the images we build of our bodies and each other's before — a la Rondinone's nudes— our patchwork selves fall apart at the seams. (2014, p.33)

On a similar note, Co-Director of Artangel, James Lingwood ends his article

After The Fall; The Re-Emergence Of The Figure In Sculpture, as follows: 'Only

two decades after its fall from grace, the figure had found its way back into the

field of contemporary sculpture' (2014, p.40), however, Lisa Lee, Assistant

Professor of Art History at Emory University, adds the caveat: 'Yet through disjunction, crudeness frivolousness and savagery, this contemporary mode of figuration has achieved formal and rhetorical power' (2014, p.47).

None of these statements (or the completed essays from which they are drawn) allude to a resounding re-emergence or conclusive position regarding the standing of the figure—or the figure, itself—in contemporary art. There is a politeness about the figure, but I am forced to draw the conclusion, that the new era of the figure in contemporary sculpture has not dawned. However, I would argue that the contemporary importance and relevance of the statue lies outside the spotlight of blockbuster exhibitions and biennales.

I adopt a philosophical approach to and slightly expanded definition of statues. When, as art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto points out, in his book *After The End Of Art: Contemporary Art And The Pale Of History*, 'an artwork can consist of any object whatsoever that is enfranchised as art [the question raised is], "Why am I a work of art?"' (p.14). With this question in mind, my aim has been to locate statues in the present as art objects able to be approached philosophically with their *history as objects* intact. The objective is to consider and regard statues and their histories in the present and to explore the possibilities statues present us as art objects and contemporary philosophical *actants*.

In 1969 the artist Joseph Kosuth writing under the pseudonym Arthur Rose proposed that 'Being an artist now means to question the nature of art. If one is questioning the nature of painting, one cannot be questioning the nature of art' (Arthur R. Rose, "Four Interviews," Arts Magazine, February, 1969); (Kosuth, 1969, p.4). Kosuth is petitioning for a new conception of art in the context of 1960s, when, as Danto points out, 'artists pressed against boundary after boundary, and found that the boundaries all gave way' (Danto, 2014, p.14). Kosuth argues specifically against examining and critiquing art through the *paragone* convention of sculpture against painting, which has veiled the nature of statues for centuries by comparing sculpture to painting.

John Dewey wrote that 'the existence of the works of art upon which formation of an esthetic theory depends has become an obstruction to theory about them' (Dewey, 2005, p.1). Dewey's purpose was to emphasize that the 'esthetic theory,' or the *art* is in the experience of the object and not in the object itself. While locating art solely in the object or the encounter is not the aim of this study, Dewey has made the distinction between object and encounter.

In this there are three points to address in the structure and ontology I propose. First, statues as art objects have particular enduring historical intricacies, which even further complicate and obstruct theory about them. This study addresses these and both the precepts and conventions that may influence our encounters with statues, and further what statues themselves as

objects may be. Second, I have made use of Object Oriented Ontology⁷ (OOO) as the larger perspective for this study and as the framework for conceiving of both statues and the encounter. This ontology supports the encounter and the object as distinct and further promotes allure and aesthetics as first philosophy⁸ but OOO holds the position that art without our encounter, or art without humans 'is like human society without humans or basketball without humans' (Harman, 2015, @2:30), suggesting the encounter is a key element. Therefore the focus of this study is on the encounter with statues rather than a discussion of the location of art.

Finally, conceiving of the encounter and the statue as identifiable and separate objects allows this study to consider the location of shifts or differences that appear in either object or encounter and to locate the conclusions and contribution this study anticipates.

Defining 'Statue'

That there is no "truth" as to what art is seems quite unrealized (Kosuth, 1969, p.6).

⁷ Object Oriented Ontology suggests that aesthetics is first philosophy. This is well laid out in *Aesthetics as First Philosophy: Levinas and the Non-Human* (Harman, 2012) (see <http://dar.aucegypt.edu/handle/10526/3073>) Also see in bibliography: (G. Harman, *Dante's Broken Hammer* 2016) (G. Harman, *Object-Oriented Seduction: Baudrillard Reconsidered* 2016) (G. Harman, 2015) (Harman, *The Third Table* 2012) (G. Harman, *The Road To Objects* 2011) (G. Harman, *The Quadruple Object* 2010) (G. Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* 2005)

⁸ See Harman, *Aesthetics as First Philosophy: Levinas and the Non-Human*, (2012) Accessed on line 2/2015 (<http://www.nakedpunch.com/articles/147>)

This study concentrates on a category of figure sculpture that has also been the particular focus of my practice. I will define and name this type of sculpture now. This is not to suggest a formalist view of the evolution of western sculpture, but a tool to isolate a particular kind of sculpture, which is the study of the figure, and not the reproduction of it. This kind of sculpture usually requires the artist to find a significant interest and perhaps some schooling in anatomy and the subtle entasis⁹ like abstraction required to correct, modify, or abstract the human form with an (incongruously) inconspicuous and informed coherence.

Artist Keith Wilson—discussing the definition of sculpture—borrows a formulation from philosopher Bernard Williams and proposes that ‘sculpture is what the history of sculpture is the history of’ (2011, @11:07) (Williams, 2006, p.212). A specific quality that delineates the category I propose is that figure sculpture makes use of and employs the history of sculpture. When Arts Research Professor, James Hall discusses the ‘very different body language’ of contemporary sculpture, he writes,

While modern art works have few qualms about invading the viewer’s own space, Old Master sculpture and painting prefer to occupy a more distinct realm. Paintings usually consist of flat, seamless expanses of paint, neatly cordoned off by a frame;

⁹ Entasis is the application of a particular convex curve to a surface of a column for aesthetic purposes. Generally the lower third of the column is straight and vertical, and the upper two-thirds are then diminished one-sixth of the diameter at the neck.

statues tend to be made with a framing wall, niche or pedestal in mind. (Hall, 1999, p.1)

Accordingly, Hall suggests that sculpture before the 20th century was focused primarily on the figure. Similarly Henry Moore writes in 1961 that we ‘shall [n]ever get far away from the thing that all sculpture is based on, in the end: the human body’ (Moore, 2002, p.200).

As a method to delineate the category of sculpture that is the focus of this study I will acknowledge and allocate a domain for each of three types of sculpture that are relevant, related and adjacent to the field I propose. This delineation is situated at the approximate start of the twentieth century when sculpture could no longer be defined as primarily concerned with the figure. I imagine the first of two divergent paths as the parting of sculpture that continues to focus on the human form, from sculpture that moves away from the human form. This second variety of sculpture—that moves away from the human form— would include Marcel Duchamp, Sol Lewitt, Dan Flavin, Rosalind Krauss’ *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* (1979), much of the work of Robert Morris, as examples.

The other, figurative path, upon which this study is focused, is also divided. This second departure is in the approach to the human form. One course makes use of the human shape through casting directly from life. For example the life-cast works of Marc Quinn, *Drawn From Life* 2017, Ugo Rondinone, wax *Nudes* 2011, Bruce Nauman, *Fifteen Pairs of Hands*, 1996, *Ten Heads Circle* 1990, and others

which is the literal form or shape of a particular human; or the space of and around the figure (the work and intention of Antony Gormley); or mannequins or literal human forms such as Yinka Shinobare MBE (RA), *Scramble For Africa* 2003 or *How To Blow-Up Two Heads At Once* 2006, Thomas Hirschhorn's work using mannequins, Paul McCarthy, *That Girl* 2012-13, and John Miller, *Now We're Big Potatoes* 1992.¹⁰ (Figures 2-7). Further focus in this category of using the shape of the figure in sculpture is the work of Juan Muñoz, who is, like Gormley, curious about the space, scale and a suggestion of the figure, rather than the body itself; while Ron Mueck and Duane Hansen focus on the curious and literal details of the everyday person.

A further example of this second variety of contemporary figure sculpture, which makes literal use of the human shape, rather than employing human form and structure, is Thomas Schütte. Schütte is described by Frieze editor Quinn Latimer as having a 'partial focus on the figure and [an] ambivalent relationship to it' (Latimer, 2009, p.3/5). She describes several of Schütte's figures as 'melty, molten and reflective, [which] evince both menace and levity: part Darth Vader, part Pillsbury Doughboy' (2009, p.3/5). Melty and molten do not particularly evidence concern with the structures of the body—nor do Darth Vader or the Pillsbury Doughboy—although interest is clearly exhibited in the suggestion of the shape of a body.

¹⁰ Many of these artists were in *The Human Factor: The Figure in Contemporary Sculpture*, in 2014 at Hayward Gallery. <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/venues/hayward-gallery/past-exhibitions/human-factor>

Adrian Searle describes the heads Schütte makes as ‘riffing on basic problems and opportunities [such as] how to form noses, or eyes in their sockets, eyebrows, ears, hair, character and expression. He has no set method, approaching each anew’ (Searle, 2012, p.2/3). It is evident that Schütte in particular is not concerned with the details of Mueck or Hansen, nor the history or traditions of modelling the body, which include a vocabulary of structure acquired through study of anatomy and the structure of the body that does not draw attention to the resolution of these particular issues. While dealing with the human form, this branch of figure work is focused on direct casting (Quinn) or a scaled detail from the body (Mueck) or an informal suggestions of the body (Juan Muñoz makes use of both, while Schütte indicates the latter), or space the body contains or displaces (Gormley). In short, these figures are an indication of—but not a study of—the figure.

The domain of figurative work that is the focus of this study and of my practice incorporates and acknowledges the traditional history of statues, as traditional subject and as monument. This category embraces and acknowledges the Greek and Roman statues of antiquity, Rodin, the Statuemanía of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, recumbent tomb figures, gisants¹¹ (including the *Dead*

¹¹ A gisant is a recumbent statue. These figures are usually made as part of the sepulchral monument for a particular person portraying that individual in effigy, but not always. A transi, or the standing or recumbent statue of a decaying corpse is sometimes concurrently made use of as a contrast to the effigy.

Hippie of Paul Thek, 1967 (Figure 8), although it incorporates life-cast parts), and the effigies of Westminster Abby.

The approach of sculptor Auguste Rodin to the figure is perhaps a clarifying example. There is a story repeated in *Rodin: Sex and the Making of Modern Sculpture*, (Getsy, 2010, p.32) about Rodin's statue, *The Age Of Bronze* 1877. (Figure 10). The statue was modelled in such a way that Rodin was accused of making a life-cast of his model. The sculptor produced the model and the number and type of sittings required to make the statue and was eventually vindicated. *The Age Of Bronze* was made after Rodin returned from a trip to Italy to study the work of Michelangelo. David Getsy writes that what Rodin saw in Michelangelo's *exaggerated* forms was 'what he believed to be evidence of another artist who blended the emotional and the sexual in his expressive rendering of the body' (Getsy, 2010, p.30). The revelations and effect of a Michelangelo's figures on the anatomy of *The Age Of Bronze* was evident, but the impact of charges of life casting *The Age Of Bronze* was that Rodin began to alter scale—to avoid further accusations at first—but which further 'activated and amplified' (p.63) his figures. This provided confirmation that life scale differs from life size, and Rodin continued to make use of both altered scale and anatomy. These abstractions or subtle alterations of the figure that allow the shape of the body to be something more than *a body*, are a defining quality of this approach to the figure.

Examples of this subtly altered approach to the figure in contemporary art can be seen in specific work but is rarely adhered to conceptually as an overall position of practice. Returning to the 2014 Southbank Centre exhibition, *The Human Factor: The Figure in Contemporary Sculpture*, artists whose particular works can be said to be about the body rather than a body copy are Pawel Althamer, *Monika and Pawel*, 2002, Huma Bhabha's work, particularly *The Orientalist* 2007, which is barely human while the seated pose is clearly but quietly convincing. Also, Paloma Varga Weisz's *Fallede Frau doppelköpfig* 2004, which makes use of casts of the artist's body translated into wood and then positioned with a vague but compelling "body" made of cloth. Finally, Rebecca Warren's *She* 2003 (Figures 11-14), a series based in realizing the female figures in Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* as three dimensional objects. While Warren's exercise is not specifically anatomically considered, it is an experiment in material, form, and the space of previously translated figures. Other artists working with interest in the structure and form of the body are often found in more craft based categories, outside Contemporary Art.

Many ceramic and woodworking artists concentrate on the figure. A brief sample of this alternate arena can be witnessed through comparing and contrasting the work of two wood sculptors. Aron Demetz's piece *Advanced Minorities* 2012¹² (Figure 15), is a group of ideal figures made of lime wood which has been milled before the wood is dry. The roughing of the wood calls

¹² Aron Demetz http://www.arondemetz.it/works.php?gall_id=36&lang_id=1 Demetz does show and work in more than wood, but his wood pieces show interest and skill in both the figure and wood.

attention to the material and the person shape at the same moment (real wood not real figure). While the expert craft and skill of Bruno Walpoth¹³ avoids the uncanny by never hiding the material, or making use of the bust form, his figures sometimes do appear to be too like us and uncomfortably naked. Walpoth, obviously aware of this awkwardness, often addresses the issue with underpants to soften the experience, perhaps exposing his discomfort with objects shaped like people rather than speaking to it. Expert skill especially in relation to this kind of figure sculpture can veil or complicate the most interesting issues.

The category of statue is expanded beyond the standing figure to include the recumbent, the seated, the hunched, the squatting, the partial (bust) and partially architectural figure. In short, figurative work that can be bound to the word or described as a statue for this study can now include figures that are concerned with some awareness, interest and knowledge of human structure and the history and traditions of statues.

A part of the accumulated history of statues is that the word itself has acquired connotations. Oxford classics professor, Peter Stewart, suggests that by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries statues had come to be perceived as having a social function, rather than an artistic one. Stewart writes that 'the word statue has all but vanished from the vocabulary of artists and critics. Few

¹³ Bruno Walpoth <http://www.walpoth.com/wood.html>

contemporary sculptors would be happy to have their work called statuary' (Stewart, 2003, p.8). He suggests that *statue* has come to indicate a mediocre and misinterpreted public figure-sculpture. Stewart also points out that the word statue is associated with portraiture and likeness, which, in the early twentieth century was 'at odds with the broader concerns of modernists' (Stewart, 2003, p.8). Statues are further linked to particular traditions and some degree of acquaintance with anatomical structures and how these configurations inform the shape of the body.

The word statue, having fallen out of favour, now subtly implies a pompous¹⁴ object outside the sphere of contemporary art. With awareness and in full embrace of the contemporary connotations that accompany it, I have used the word statue, a sculptural object shaped like a person, to indicate and expand a category of historical and contemporary figure sculpture which includes the figurative work constructed in my practice and that is the focus of this project. The history, social functions, and public figure-sculpture nature of the human figure as a statue, will be called on in this study, and I will argue for these aspects as a portion of the value and consequence of these objects.

Reflection and Methods

¹⁴ Adding to pompous is the pejorative *Pompier* as used by the poet C. Baudelaire. Fred Licht expands the definition in his book *Sculpture*, (Licht, 1967, p.21) using the word to describe a slavishly imitative artist who plays to taste and convention. It derives from the French word for Fireman, who, in the 1890s wore hats similar in form to those in portrayals of the Greek Gods in art at that time.

Introspection has no privileged access to reality even though it is we ourselves that are looking at ourselves. (Harman, 2013, @11:10)

A primary concern throughout this study has been reflection, or in this case, reflecting upon. A manifestation of this difficulty is the double position of being both a part of the encounter with statues, and attempting to fully realize that encounter. This double, or contrary nature quickly resulted in a third understanding: that being part of some thing does not equate to knowing about it. While we are part of our encounter with statues, we do not always appear to fully perceive what happens during that encounter, the nature of that encounter is not always fully available to us. This led to accepting that although I am the architect of my studio practice, I am also an integral part of it, and therefore have a constrained perspective on what happens there. While we are part of our encounter with statues, we do not always appear to fully perceive what happens during that encounter, the nature of that encounter is not always fully available to us. The concept that being a part of an encounter does not directly equal full understanding of that encounter, is expanded on by Tim Morton (2013) (2013), and Harman (2005) (2010) (2016).

In order to promulgate and broadly contextualize this study, I have critically engaged with the general field of philosophy known as speculative realism¹⁵, and more specifically with Object Oriented Ontology, and also with theories of embodiment and access as defined by Professor of Neuroscience, Psychology

¹⁵ Speculative Realism is the name given to the group of philosophers that met at a conference of the same name at Goldsmiths College in 2007.

and Philosophy Antonio Damasio and Philosopher Alva Noë. As noted earlier, I have made use of Object Oriented Ontology¹⁶ as the larger context and ontology for this study and as a structure for conceiving of both statues and the encounter. I will focus on the encounter and the statue as separate objects in order to suggest a shift or difference in one or the other and to locate the conclusions and contribution this study anticipates.

With the understanding that I am part of my practice and that no work is made in the studio without me, and equally that I am unable to make work without the studio, the methods for conducting this research manifested from methods already in place in practice. In this way the encounter with making statues in the studio was placed at the centre of the approach to methods. These methods were refined and focused by engaging four concepts.

First, as an initial and general approach, I have made use of Bricolage¹⁷, which is described by Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss in his book, *The Savage Mind* (1966). Levi-Strauss describes two approaches to acquiring knowledge, the scientific and the bricolage. The *Bricoleur* or handy man has collected the

¹⁶ See bibliography: (G. Harman, Dante's Broken Hammer 2016) (G. Harman, Object-oriented seduction: Baudrillard reconsidered 2016)(G. Harman, Graham Harman: Anthropocene Ontology 2015) (G. Harman, Aesthetics as First Philosophy: Levinas and the Non-Human 2012) (Harman, The Third Table 2012) (G. Harman, The Road To Objects 2011) (G. Harman, The Quadruple Object 2010) (G. Harman, Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things 2005)

¹⁷ Further, bricolage both supports and is supported by Karen Barad's concept of diffraction rather than reflection. Diffraction is further addressed in chapter three.

tools and materials for addressing the problems that arise in his world. Levi-Strauss explains:

The elements are collected or retained on the principle that they may always come in handy. Such elements are specialized up to a point, sufficiently for the bricoleur [handy man] not to need the equipment and knowledge of all trades and professions. (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p.24).

The 'piecing together' aspect of this method (bricolage) was an apt and fruitful approach and supported relying on my practice as a place that had attracted relevant tools and ideas. I identified with the bricoleur character, which provided a framework for me to consider what had been collected and presented through practice over the last several decades. Second, an understanding of reflection on practice, as discussed by Donald Schön, addressed complex issues of reflection,¹⁸ and thirdly, feminist theorist, Karen Barad's (2007) concept of diffraction. Barad gains her initial ideas of diffraction as a useful tool from Professor at University of California, Santa Cruz and fellow feminist, Donna Haraway. Both maintain that, rather than comparing the reflections of ideas, which transfer the same image or idea to a different place, we should look for the differences in similar ideas.

¹⁸ As I discuss in the projects section, I did not find that phenomenology as a specific method effected change in what I understood about what I do in my practice.

Diffraction defined in this way allowed the ideas collected through practice to expand rather than endlessly reflect and bolster an initial theory, and usefully models an alternative to a direct reflection. Finally, diffraction was enhanced and put into practice by following Grounded Theory Data Analysis (GTDA) guidelines throughout this research. GTDA offered particular methods, as per (Glaser, 1992) for organizing, comprehending, and recognizing as data things I had done through practice for many years, as well as an approach to data that delayed conclusions and assessments, or assumes the data has more to offer than proving a preconceived theory, which further complimented diffraction and Object Oriented Ontology.

Through employing GTDA—for example on recorded conversations, slides of years of work, video of myself working in the studio—I found a method to apply a diffractive view¹⁹ to specific data. This included working to understand Harman’s Object Oriented Ontology, which has supplied a platform from which to test and compare actions and ideas, and has facilitated the expression of knowing through practice.

Confirming the usefulness of such a platform, and substantiating that the knowledge generated by performing practice ‘is inevitably difficult to

¹⁹ I literally viewed the slides and the videos. Furthermore, although I attempted to work from transcripts of conversations, subtle meaning and metaphorical speaking was lost. Rather, I listened repeatedly (in the car, on walks, etc.) to the conversations, and found the coding to be generated more naturally and the theory *made its self known* through the repetition.

articulate' (MacLeod, 2000, p.5), fine art and research theorist Katy Macleod, posits in *Functions Of The Written Text In Practice-Based Research*, that this knowing 'is theory which is not written; it is made or realised through artwork. This theory is the result of ideas worked through matter' (MacLeod, 2000, p.5). This definition draws attention to both the issue of reflecting on and articulating what happens in practice while practicing, and subsequently indicates the discrete consequence of both the encounter with statues, and statues as art objects themselves.

One of three animating ideas in Noë's book, *Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature*, is that 'art is a philosophical practice' (Noë, 2015, p.xiii). Just as Dewey separates the art object from our encounter with it, Noë's point is made through conceiving of art practice as comparable to philosophical practice, or as a tool we use to put the 'complexity of our own activities of thinking on display' (Noë, 2015, p.16). The result (or the object) is not a 'positive knowledge, or settled agreement' (p.17). The outcome of practice is knowing how, or an understanding that. Therefore, the object is not an illustration of thinking or a specific knowledge.

A framing for these less than specific 'results' (as per Noë above) is suggested by the concept of *tacit knowledge*, as introduced in scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi's book, *Personal Knowledge* (1974). Polanyi correspondingly posits that this knowledge is generated through doing, through a practice, and

is often difficult to directly articulate. Polanyi writes, we 'know more than we can tell' (Polanyi, 2009, p.4). Articulating an embodied, tacit knowing that resists expression introduces the structural concern this text addresses, and the role it plays in the expression and effecting of this study.

This is understood in arts-based research. Analogously defining these outcomes, philosopher Mark Johnson points out in his essay, *Embodied Knowing Through Art*, (included in *The Routledge Companion To Research In The Arts*), that arts research is focused on 'the process of knowing, as contrasted with knowledge as a body of true statements' (p.145). Conceiving of what is gained through art practice as comparable to a philosophical approach to knowledge, and further, that knowing through practice is the less explicit objective gained through an embodied process, begins to establish the approach to articulating the form of knowledge gained in the studio. This indicates how knowledge is conceived of and made use of through practice, throughout this project, and how knowing versus knowledge influences the shape of the contribution this study finally endeavours to make.

Berlin University of the Arts professor, Kathrin Busch states particularly that 'artworks do not need to be a kind of research themselves, nor do they have to adhere to certain scientific standards' (Busch, 2009, p.2). Busch is working to move the template for arts research away from that of science research and away from a specific outcome. Busch, further indicating the boundaries of this

project, allows that the artwork (statue) is not specifically the locus of this knowledge writing that 'knowledge generated through art cannot as easily be brought to a precise point, as might be implied by the phrase "art as science" (Busch, 2009, p.5).

Busch then puts forward a number of definitions of outcome for artistic research. In a 2009 *Art & Research* article titled *Artistic Research And The Poetics Of Knowledge*, definition number six suggests 'Art as a different form of knowledge' (Busch, 2009, p.4). Art, she suggests, 'can thus reveal the concealed, flipside of knowledge' (p.4). Busch positions art as able to point to what is obscured or concealed by the structure of other forms of knowledge. I contend that this revealing of the flipside, or the revealing of assumptions, is what this study has aimed to achieve. Statues therefore, the physical result of practice, are positioned as a means through which knowing can be both displayed and provoked, revealing what is frequently masked or veiled.

This study has been designed to express the *more* (as per Lucian Freud) that statues offer, what is understood through practice about the human form as an object, and how that *more* critically engages particularly with concepts in embodiment and Object Oriented Ontology revealing ways in which we approach objects and consider our relations. The objects I make through practice both are and are not where this knowledge and knowing is contained. While the work produced during this study has substantiated the conclusion, it

is not the locus of the contribution. This is reaffirmed in Busch's allowance that artwork or statues may not specifically be the locus of this knowledge and is repeated when Noë, making a similar point, explains that the value of money is not actually an element of—or found in—the physical bills (2013). This is the position addressed through making the distinction of the encounter from the object in this project. It is the making, and reflecting on that making, and reflecting on the resulting work using methods designed for this study, that house what this study contributes. The work cannot be said to be the specific documentation and result of research, and the outcome of this study is not a single, bounded conclusion.

My perception of the encounter, statues, and practice, has altered through this research, which supports the desired outcome. This study acknowledges and addresses issues of reflection, representation, and materials related to statues generally, as well as the object's history and position in a contemporary art practice. What is proposed through this study is a revised assessment of statues as objects, and philosophical *actants*, what is readily revealed about objects to us through them, and what they silently expose about us.

Chapters

Chapter one identifies and positions statues as objects beyond my practice and addresses several of the challenges statues as art objects present to our contemporary encounter with them. It begins with the varieties of encounters

with statues, moves to discussion of the historical and conceptual background of statues, and begins to situate statues contemporarily, for this study.

Chapter two outlines my encounter with statues through my practice. This includes craft, materials, and the figure. The chapter then moves on to explore how my practice informed and bounded the methods that make up the methodology of this study, and includes a discussion of how the methods of this study functioned.

Chapter three considers reflection on practice in the studio and examines embodiment and mirror neurons as means through which we recognize and respond to other bodies. Several of the projects constructed and performed as research through studio practice are drawn and considered. The Conversation Project, which differs from the studio projects in that I recorded conversations about statues with others, is outlined, and discussed and reveals a duality in how we speak about our encounter with statues.

Chapter four begins by demonstrating statues as a philosophical actant through the work of Graham Harman. This is attained through situating statues as art objects in philosophical or conceptual terms by considering our encounter with them and the practice-based research performed for this study through the lens

of Object Oriented Ontology. The conclusion this study arrives at and the contribution this study makes are then restated and summarized.

CHAPTER 1

Thinking About Statues

"Sculpture is what you bump into when you back up to see a painting," Barnett Newman said in the fifties (Newman quoted in Krauss (1979, p.34).

This chapter aims to position statues as objects beyond my practice and to identify and consider several of the challenges statues as art objects present to our contemporary encounter with them.

A characterization of uneasiness with the human figure is the uncanny, as defined by Lucian Freud's grandfather, Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud wrote about issues of expectation or the customary and setting in his 1919 essay *The Uncanny*. Freud began by clarifying that, as a psychoanalyst, he was addressing aesthetics as meaning 'not merely the theory of beauty, but the theory of the qualities of feeling' (Freud, 1925, p.219). He outlined his description of the uncanny as the familiar in a context of uncertainty (in this case, appearing human but obviously not human), which he suggests usually causes eerie feelings and revulsion.

Drawing on Freud's writing, Robotist Masahiro Mori charts an uncanny valley (Mori, 1970), illustrating the points at which human-looking robots (moving or still) cause alarm or repulsion, cancelling out an empathic response which is imperative to human/robot interactions. In a 2012 interview with journalist

Norri Kageki, Mori provocatively points out that we still can't fully 'explain why we feel eerie to begin with' (Kageki, 2012).

While Mori's too-human robots cause alarm or repulsion, the same verisimilitude can cause a statue to appear inert or pompous, as I will describe. It is perhaps the response of the uncanny—to a copy of life—that accounts in part for the necessarily intentionally abstracted anatomy of a figure required to allow a statue to *exceed* being merely a body. This understanding further supports use of the descriptive coinage *emotional anatomy* to communicate the impetus to alter the body when making statues, which further requires some knowledge of human anatomy.²⁰

However, art historian and presenter Waldemar Januszczak referring to Ibeji twin figures, expresses his own unease with statues. The twin figures are images of children not present, and although they do not appear lifelike, the uncanny is present partly as the imperative that these statues must be cared for. 'That's sculpture for you,' says Januszczak, 'it frightens the parts other arts can't reach' (The Sculpture Diaries, 2007, @21:07). That the uncanny appears in the statues need to be cared for or in the encounter and not in the statue, proposes the impetus to separate and investigate both the encounter and the statue.

²⁰ It is relevant to note that just because we are a body does not mean we have a grasp of anatomy or even how our body works beyond our direct experience.

Iconoclasm

A traditional challenge or threat to statues is iconoclasm. This rejection or destruction of actual objects, particularly ones shaped like people, is commonly linked to the concern that the object represents, or actually is, an authority that is false or pernicious, or the embodiment of a rejected idea. There is the hacking, breaking kind of iconoclasm where images are destroyed and statues are defaced and broken, but there are further varieties of conceptual iconoclasm that have an equally disfiguring impact. In philosophy, iconoclasm frequently rises from assumptions about the definition of art or aesthetics and therefore, in defining art.

Philosopher Michael Kelly, in his book, *Iconoclasm In Aesthetics* (2003), asserts that it is an assumption of philosophy that there is a deficiency written into the conception of art. His aim is to expose the iconoclasm that results from these assumptions, and to provide alternatives to the 'philosophical conceptions of art which generate it' (Kelly, 2003, p.xii). While Kelly points to assumptions about truth in art and considers iconoclasm in other philosophers, his first discussion concerns Martin Heidegger's lecture and essay, *The Origin of the Work of Art*. Kelly refers to Heidegger's disinterest in the van Gogh painting of shoes, (made use of as an example in the essay), through critic Meyer Shapiro's

1968 attempts to engage Heidegger, but I will make use of Kelly's indications of iconoclasm to point to a specific approach to overlooking the art object.

In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger makes the point, important to this study, that the 'work of art is still something else over and out of the *thingly* aspect. This other that is in it makes up the artistic' (Heidegger, 2006, p.4). In short, the art is more than the 'thing' alone. Moreover, Kelly interprets Heidegger as warning that each concept we bring to interpret the object 'does violence to things because each projects our way of understanding onto them' (Kelly, 2003, p.23).²¹ Additionally, Heidegger suggests that to discover *the essence of art* in the work, 'we seek out the actual work and ask the work what and how it is' (Heidegger, 2006, p.3). However, when Heidegger then moves to a description of the painting of shoes, he writes 'Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field path as evening falls' (Heidegger, 2006, p.17). This is not a description of the van Gogh painting, or any painting of shoes. The object itself, a painting of shoes (not shoes), is lost to poetic projections about shoes.

In a similar vein, Harman contends that 'most western philosophy and science is actually an attempt to get rid of objects' (2017, @3:02). Harman points out that most objects can lose a significant number of pieces such as atoms and still be the same object. This idea dissolves objects into a mass of atoms or any other tiny but fundamental thing. The object itself is lost. 'A thing is not that

²¹ This echoes Levinas' cautions about our encounter with the other.

dependent on its tiniest pieces, which can change' (Harman, 2015, @6:02).

When we work to discover the thing that things are made of, we forgo the thing itself. Harman submits that:

We find it easy to talk about things like Amsterdam being the same city from one century to the next even when people die and are replaced [. . .] or when the city annexes new territory and gets bigger, or builds new structures. (2015, pp.5:43)²²

Similarly, I can lose a finger, or cut my hair and be the same person. There is more to an object than what we conceive of it being made of. This is an iconoclasm of fundamental assumptions. Kelly points to this abstract iconoclasm, writing that Martin Luther worked to assuage people of the concept that images and statues could heal or perform miracles of any kind. Luther's focus was to alter the way statues were conceived of as a means to disempower, rather than destroy them, 'since any individual images destroyed can be replaced' (Kelly, 2003, p.5). Luther aimed at a permanent solution to the losing of religious authority and focus to statues.

Another more subtle example is provided by the way in which University of Toronto Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Literature, Rebecca Comay approaches several varieties of iconoclasm in her article *Defaced Statues*:

²² This argument as well as that things must exist outside of our thinking can be found in *The Road To Objects* (Harman, 2011) and *The Quadruple Object* (Harman, 2010) as well as many of Harman's other works. I expand on our position in the world, and OOO is fully addressed in chapter four.

*Idealism And Iconoclasm In Hegel's Aesthetics*²³. To briefly explore one repetition of image breaking in particular, Comay clarifies Hegel's employment of Greek statues, 'stripped of paint through centuries of erosion (Comay, 2014, p.124), as 'bleached-out tabula rasa' (p.137), to critique the justifications of a rising German nation in the nineteenth century.

Comay suggests that Hegel's point is that Greek statues, representing the perfected form of the body politic the Germans worked to co-opt, are reproductions and inferior. Hegel implies that because statues are merely reproductions of people, and therefore a simulacrum, they are merely reproduction, and without the substance of the original, real thing. The statues are both Roman copies of Greek statues and copies of people, they are then copies of copies, and therefore meaningless as justification for a more convenient or contemporary story.²⁴ This certainty of the meaninglessness of what is conceived of as a copy, a reproduced person and artwork, already of lesser value, occurs before the statue as an object is ever considered.

²³ The Greek statues are representations of toned athletes, representing the perfected body politic. Comay points out in part that Hegel takes issue with the statues as both copies of people and copies of statues they are copies and that the German state of the nineteenth century is justifying itself by simulating what it has decided the statues mean, co-opting the perceived meaning of copies of statues.

²⁴ The Elgin Marbles, scrubbed and bleached to "return" them to their snowy purity in 1938-39, at the request of Lord Duveen. 'But as representative of the culture of ancient Greece, as the genesis of the ideal of humanism and beauty in art, there is also the argument that the Parthenon frieze belongs to world culture, to all of us who even unknowingly derive something of our democratic aesthetic from it' (Hitchens 2008, pp. vii-viii).

Writer Susan Sontag suggests that because we historically think of and therefore, read artwork—or a statue—as mimetic or realist, we have learned to remove the content from the form. This is a ‘well-intentioned move, which makes content essential and form accessory’ (Sontag, 2001, p.4). We encounter statues with a variety of historic assumptions in place. We see the statue as a lesser, and perhaps disappointing copy of a person, and in stopping there miss the further implications an object shaped like a person might offer us. The following section works to further reveal this subtle iconoclasm, or ways in which statues are ignored, or dismissed in our encounters.

Touch and Tactility

The plea “Do not touch!” was (and still is) the consequence of the triumph, in the “work of art,” of the image over the *thing*, the continuation of a consecration of its *unreal* side. Images, as we know, are different from the rest of the world: *they do not exist*. (Stoichita, 2008, p.1)

Sculpture initiates the problem of touch. Philosopher Hagi Kenaan writes about how the detaching of touch from sight, (sculpture from painting) veils the importance of sight to our encounter with a statue.

In other words, sculpture does not address our tactile sensibilities independently of vision; on the contrary, its tactility manifests itself precisely within the confines of what the eye reveals to us (Kenaan, 2014, p.46).

Tactility, or seeing materials and imagining or *knowing* what they feel like or are like, begins with previous experience and is partly achieved through seeing. We see an object and in seeing know the object occupies space in our world, rather than knowing this through touching or another autonomous sense. While we may occasionally have permission to touch sculpture, this is not usually the case.

Tactility is found in Noë's account of our access to knowledge, which advances that we are conscious of both more and less than we experience visually. He says that if we see a tomato on the table we do not actually see the other side of it, but we know it is there. Our access to the knowledge of previous tomatoes on tables informs what we see (Noë, 2015, p.151&187). Our sight is informing our brain which is informing our sight which is informing our brain. Noë submits that consciousness is embodied (Noë, 2015, p.68). He argues that consciousness is something you do in the world, not something that happens inside of you. Noë is further advancing that we bring our past experiences with objects and knowledge of them to our encounters with them (Noë, 2009), (Noë, 2013). It would follow that we also do this with statues. We bring our history with materials, objects, and people to the encounter. It is these collective and personal histories that sketch out the boundaries of our encounters.

Tactility is closely related to touch, but is focused more on the form of a statue as opposed to touch, which might consider the material of a statue. If we touch Proserpina's thigh in the statue *Rape of Proserpina*, (fig. 28) by Bernini 1622,

we will feel marble, which differs from the experience of seeing Pluto's fingers gripping her skin. In his book, *Falling In Love With Statues* (2008), art historian George Hersey proposes that Ovid (writing in the year 1 AD) in *Pygmalion*²⁵ introduced the sculptural virtue of tactility as 'a work's ability to make the viewer feel in his or her own body what the portrayed figure would be feeling if it were real' (p.19). However, when this additional virtue was revisited in the mid-twentieth century, it had been influenced by the Renaissance *Paragone* (comparison) *Debates*. These comparisons usually found painting to be the superior art form, and led to the examination and interpretation of sculpture principally in terms more suited to painting.²⁶ Tactility, as it evolved in the early twentieth-century, was a method used particularly by art historian and collector Bernard Berenson, and English art historian and critic Herbert Read for discussion and critique of painting and, to some extent sculpture. As it developed and matured in the mid-twentieth century, the translation of the illusion of touchability into a theory of sculpture focused on materials, quickly

²⁵ It may be interesting to note that the Pygmalion story is a story. No sculpture was actually made in order to convey the point of the story. Furthermore, a confusing and perhaps remnant element from older versions of the story is that Galatea is made of ivory. Very few pieces of ivory are large enough to be even the life-scale limb of a person.

²⁶ Arts Research Professor, James Hall recounts Leonardo Da Vinci making clear in his notebooks that painting should be considered superior to sculpture because:

'Sculpture is missing the beauty of colors, it is missing the perspective of colors, it is missing the perspective and confusion of boundaries of things distant from the eye, because the boundaries of things nearby will be known just like those which are distant. The air interposed between a distant object and the eye will not fill the space around that object more than it does around a nearby object' (Farago, 1992, p.275) #41 reiterate.

One of the arguments in favour of painting was that painting can recreate the forms of nature more perfectly, and a large part of this perfection is the ease of correcting mistakes, which Da Vinci suggests, is not possible with sculpture. Hall points to where Da Vinci writes that, 'Sculpture is not a science but a very mechanical art, because it causes its executant sweat and bodily fatigue' (Hall, 1999, p.13). The thought was also that God painted the world into existence, with all the perspective that implies, and as such painters had to exert their minds, rather than their bodies, to achieve the perspective, colour, and the light convincingly, while sculptors only had to work their bodies.

dismissing statues as an art form that concealed or disregarded the true nature of the physical materials from which they were made.

Berenson had introduced *tactile values* in his essay *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* (1896), as a method to systematize authentication of old master paintings through designating those conditions in a painting that stimulate the sense of touch, and are therefore, masterful. Berenson explained that because our minds have practiced since infancy to give 'tactile values to retinal impressions' (Berenson, 1896, p.11), we are primed to see and feel the space invented by the skill of particular artists.²⁷ Berenson's focus was on the skill in the performance of the illusion of tactility in paintings, the quality of the object appearing solid, touchable, real and dimensional. According to Berenson we 'realise objects when we perfectly translate them into terms of our own states, our own feelings' (Berenson, 1896, p.84). His argument was that the quality of the illusion in art could augment life, writing that if a figure is 'represented so as to be realised more quickly and vividly than in life, [it] will produce its effect with such velocity and power, and so strongly confirm our sense of capacity for living' (Berenson, 1896, p.85). In short, the more convincing the illusion, the more quickly we benefit from what is 'directly life-confirming and life-enhancing' (p.87) in art.

²⁷ In 1305 Giotto curiously illustrates a difficulty with sculpture in the *Arena Chapel*. He paints twelve *trompe-l'oeil* statues of virtues and vices. Over each he writes the name of the virtue or the vice the *statue* personifies. At the same time, Giotto covered the walls of the chapel with frescos showing the stories of Medieval Christian tradition, including the life of Christ. None of these character-filled, bustling illustrations required a label except the (faux) statues. Hall writes that Giotto *implies the sculpture, for all its bulk and presence, is a less effective visual language*. (111) It is as if even a painting of a statue were a mute, solitary object.

Berenson warned that in sculpture there is the danger of anthropomorphizing the object, as when we speak of trains *running* or the legs of a table. He writes that there is 'only one object in the visible universe which we need not anthropomorphize to realize' (85), and that is ourselves. He argues that the more we bestow an object 'with human attributes, the less we merely know it, the more we *realise* it, the more does it approach the work of art' (Berenson, 1896, p.84). While Berenson insists that there is no visible object of such artistic possibilities as the human body' (85), he has been sure to impart something of the peril that a statue and the associations of the real that tactile values might impart are in excess over the painting of a person.

Sculptural tactility appears again as an illusory form in the mid-twentieth century, by Herbert Read in *The Art Of Sculpture* (1977). Read writes about the tactile imagination as touch-space.²⁸ However, while Berenson is interested in the quality of the illusion of touchability in painting,²⁹ Read is speaking about sculpture, where tactility is not an illusion of the real, but 'a reality to be conveyed' (Read, 1977, p.49). Tactility or touch was opposed to sight and vision, and positioned by Read to introduce a distinct identity and method of criticism for sculpture that was disengaged from painting. Read's solution, after

²⁸ Read quotes William James on tactility, citing 'only through the association of ideas do we know what a seen object signifies in terms of touch' Wm. James, *Psychology* 1892, P. 339 (Read, 1977, p.47)

²⁹ Read, writing about Botticelli's *Pallas Taming A Centaur*, declared that it 'appeals so vividly to the sense of touch that our fingers feel as if they had everywhere been in contact with his body' (Berenson, 1896, p.72)

wrestling with a conceptual and metaphoric sense of touch was, suggests David Getsy, *ponderability* (p.106). Ponderability for Read, is the implied mass and volume of sculpture which, Read believed, was disconnected from visual engagement with sculpture and known through embodiment. (Getsy, 2011, p.105).

However, Read makes the argument that statues specifically were subject to a Renaissance 'convention based on the ideals of the Hellenistic decadence' (Read, 1977, p.72), which was to obscure sculptural material under an illusion of cloth or perfect skin, which discounted the natural physical and material traits of the substance used to make the statue. David Getsy points out that it was for this reason that 'the figurative traditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in particular, are subject to [Read's] frequent scorn' (Getsy, 2011, p.106). Read did not draw out tactility to mean knowing what it was like to touch a figure, his concern was that materials not be obscured by form. Read's great support of British sculptor Henry Moore suggests it was not the concept of the figure, but concealing the natural 'ponderability' of materials that attracted his contempt.

That statues were argued against because the illusion of the form obscured the materials, was an attempt to bring modernist critique to sculpture. However, sculpture—including statues—performs in the world like other everyday objects, albeit in an art context where touching is rarely encouraged. As an

example, for this project, in 2014, I constructed copies of my ceramic and steel work in lightweight foam. One of the seven-foot tall (2.1M) figures would normally weigh about three hundred pounds (136K). The tactile experience—especially for those familiar with my work—was in reading the label and discovering the weight of the piece to be thirty-five pounds (11K). We don't need to touch everything we see to experience it tactilely, seeing is often enough or all that is appropriate. We come to objects with a tactile vocabulary.

Hersey's understanding of tactility,³⁰ presented more than two thousand years ago in Ovid's *Pygmalion*, supports Berenson's Tactile Values theory (Berenson, 1896), which, in short, defines how we might have a sympathetic sensation or know what it would *feel* like to *caress the flesh* in a work of art.

These conceptions of the role of touch in statues would seem to align with what neuroscientist Antonio Damasio suggests as the function of neurons that fire in the brain, both during an action and when observing an action performed by another, called mirror neurons. Damasio writes that the 'fact that a body state simulated by mirror neurons is not the subject's body state amplifies the power of this functional resemblance' (Damasio, 2010, p.110). It is possible that mirror neurons are the mechanism by which we empathize or understand what

³⁰ "Tactility is a work's ability to make the viewer feel in his or her own body what the portrayed figure would be feeling if it were real" (Hersey, 2008, p.19).

someone else might be experiencing and possibly, what something else might be feeling.

Furthermore, both Damasio (2010) and neuroscientist V. S. Ramachandran (2012) discuss these neurons as a means through which we communicate and interact with others. Ramachandran suggests that mirror neurons ‘perform a virtual reality simulation of the other person’s action,’ and that this replication dissolves ‘the barrier between you and other human beings’ (Ramachandran, 2009, @6:00). Again, the importance of what it is supposed mirror neurons do, for this particular study, is that those barriers ‘between you and other human beings’ dissolve without actually touching. As Berenson defines the *realising* of objects, as opposed to the *anthropomorphizing* of objects, it becomes relevant to this study.

Our encounters with statues perhaps point to a more intricate concession than merely attributing human motives and thoughts to an object shaped like a person. Noë writes that we make the assumption ‘that the membrane dividing brain and environment is somehow the causally critical division between self and world’ (Noë, 2015, pp.124-25). He continues by observing that art objects are ‘opportunities or affordances’ (p.124) for an encounter, rather than a didactic and specific prompt. There is more to touch than touching in the engagement or encounter with statues; we experience touch without having to specifically touch, in the moment, because we have touched and bring this

knowing with us to the encounter. Moreover, we have touched metals, wood, rocks, other materials, and people before. We arrive at the statue already knowledgeable about what is unusual about this object from previous encounters with people and materials. Furthermore, specifically what the material feels like may not be the isolated central issue.

Touching as a means to judge sculpture is misused as something literal. That touch is possible with sculpture is a feature of the real thing in the world, that when we touch the statue's hand, we are not touching a real hand is a feature of statues. This is the important dichotomy always present in the encounter with statues.

Pygmalion

Images are without life, and sacrifices do them no good. The lowest animals are better than any statues (Clement, 1960, p.vii).

Herbert Read, grappling to articulate a theory of tactility, writes, 'Ideally each reader of this volume should be provided, at this stage, with a piece of sculpture to hug, cuddle, fondle—primitive verbs that indicate a desire to treat an object with plastic sensibility' (Read, 1977, p.72). This 'unfortunate point in *The Art Of Sculpture*' (Getsy, 2011, p.108), indicates Read's noted inclination toward the soft lines of Henry Moore's figures, but also suggests something more profound about touch in this context. Touching is obfuscated by words. What happens is resistant to, is not easily penetrable through specific language. Read tells us

that the words at his disposal to speak about his imagined experience were primitive and perhaps hazardous.

The pull of aberrant touching and the dangers of unendorsed and unfettered touch are found in the many versions of the Pygmalion story.³¹ Ovid's conventional version, made use of by Hersey (2008) to indicate tactility and the sense that a statue can incite real emotions and feelings in us and that these feelings might be rewarded, is an optimistic adaptation. Classics scholar Rachel Bruzzone points out that, 'like every other story involving sex with a statue (*agalmatophilia*³²) [the story remains] one of perversion and violation of the divine' (Bruzzone, 2012, p.65).³³ Correspondingly, the language Herbert Read assembled to communicate his thinking about touching sculpture (cuddle and hug), was awkward enough to attract derision. However, it is similar to Ovid's

³¹ Three further sources: Philostratus, *life of Apollonius* 6:40; Lucian, *Imagines* 4 – 'of the man who fell in love with the statue, and contrived to get shut into the temple alone, and there enjoyed such favours as a statue is able to bestow.' (Lucian 1905); 'So the well-known Pygmalion of Cyprus fell in love with an ivory statue; it was of Aphrodite and was naked. The man of Cyprus is captivated by its shapeliness and embraces the statue' (Philostephanus, *Frag.* 13 *Hist. Graec.* iii p.31)(Butterworth n.d.)(p. 131) (Clement, 1960, p.131).

³² For more about *Agalmatophilia*, see *Guys and Dolls*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxCkULUnVH0

³³ The familiar story of the sculptor who desires his creation calls up two particular points: one is the second commandment and the other is a warning about the longevity of this transgression. In the story the statue Galatea and Pygmalion have a child Paphos, who has a son, who has a daughter named Myrrha, who desires her father. She tricks her father into sex and then runs away, becoming the Myrrh tree just before giving birth to Adonis. Her offense is in some ways the mirror opposite of her great-grandmother. Probably because Myrrha was the mother of Adonis, who also has many guises, there are several versions of this story but the most familiar is in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Myrrha is also seen in Dante's *Inferno*, (canto XXX, verses 34-48) in the eighth circle of Hell. The incest theme recounted in Mary Shelley's *Mathilda*—who was known to be familiar with *Mirra* (1786) by Vittorio Alfieri—was influenced by or *cloaked* in the story of Myrrha.

unsettling but stimulating account of Pygmalion's blatantly iniquitous touching of his statue.

The best art, they say,
Is that which conceals art, and so Pygmalion
Marvels, and loves the body he has fashioned.
He would often move his hands to test and touch It,
Could this be flesh, or was it ivory only?
No, it could not be ivory. His kisses,
He fancies, she returns; he speaks to her,
Holds her, believes his fingers almost leave
An imprint on her limbs, and fears to bruise her (Ovid, 1983, p.242).

This is not the customary or usual encounter with statues, although it is known to occur. It is clear what Pygmalion is feeling and how he is touching, and this signals that he has stepped away from his role as sculptor. Touch here is explained through recounting extremely intimate and direct contact, using suggestive words. As a contrast to Pygmalion, a fictitious sculptor, my contact with my figures in the studio is concrete, and while the contact with the material could be considered intimate, a motivating recognition in my practice is that the figures are not actually people. My purpose in practice is to transmit an intention, the idea or feeling I have, whether it is of the pathos of an old man, or a persuasive calming in a tall, columnar woman figure, through the figure.

(Images 2-3)

In both Herbert Read's suggestion that each reader have a sculpture to fondle, and the Pygmalion story, where a man made and loved a statue of ivory, no real

life touching has or had actually occurred. Both are theoretical. Read was attempting to define a concept and to clarify a point in art criticism; Pygmalion is only a story about an aberrant sculptor, yet we are aware of how the intimate touching of a statue, and the suggestion of cuddling and fondling of sculpture elicits the awkward and untoward.

L'Oeuvre, or the Masterpiece, a novel by French writer Émile Zola published in 1886, is about artists in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Paris. Zola describes an incident concerning touch in the studio of the sculptor, Mahoudeau. Mahoudeau is working on a standing figure of a bathing girl in clay. It is winter and the studio is very cold. The clay of the bathing girl has frozen, but his friend, the painter, Claude, has come to see the statue. Mahoudeau lights the studio stove and the statue begins to thaw, eventually crashing to the ground.

Dreading to see her finish herself off on the floor, Mahoudeau remained with hands outstretched. And the girl seemed to fling herself on his neck. He caught her in his arms, winding them tightly around her. Her bosom was flattened against his shoulder and her thighs beat against his own, while her decapitated head rolled upon the floor. The shock was so violent that Mahoudeau was carried off his legs and thrown over, as far back as the wall; and there, without relaxing his hold on the girl's trunk, he remained as if stunned lying beside her (Zola, 2009, p.212).

Zola clearly illustrates this accidental moment of intimate touch of statue and sculptor as surprising and unusual. The story goes on to inspect how the sculpture's collapse touched something discomfited in the painter Claude.

Claude recounts to his wife, Christine, the story of the collapse of the *Bather Girl* he witnessed in Mahoudeau's studio.

Christine washed the scratch on his cheek, which had begun to bleed again, and it seemed to her as if the mutilated bathing girl had sat down to table with them, as if she alone was of any importance that day; for she alone seemed to interest Claude, whose narrative, repeated a score of times, was full of endless particulars about the emotion he had felt on seeing that bosom and those hips of clay shattered at his feet. (Zola, 2009, p.214)

Claude's story of seeing Mahoudeau and the statue touch in faux impropriety had inspired a jealous feeling in the painter's wife. Claude never touched the statue, and the statue was not a real girl. Mahoudeau's intention was to make a statue of a bathing girl, traditionally, an acceptable subject of desire³⁴, and that intention was perhaps the initial source (translated though Claude) of Christine's jealousy, but it is clear that Mahoudeau, illustrated by the frozen state of the statue, had no thought the statue was a girl or that she was alive.

The actual touching of statues appears to be more aligned with our real-world experience of touch, we are not moved to, nor do we need to touch everything and everyone we encounter and yet we are influenced and affected.

Apotropaism

³⁴ As an example, see stories about *Actaeon* who was punished for watching the goddess Diana bathing.

There are conditions where touching statues and other objects can be sanctioned, and carried out repeatedly. For many years, through work in the studio, I pursued an interest in Herms. Herms are a form of ancient Greek statue, the remnants of which are still found in surviving nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture. They are apotropaic, suggesting they provide 'protection' and are touched for luck.

The ancient Herm is a flat-four sided column with a head of the trickster messenger god Hermes, and a phallus, associated with fertility, life force, protection and good fortune. The phallus as part of the Herm probably descends from the baboons associated with the Ancient Egyptian god Thoth. There are several murals of baboons with erect phalluses in the tomb of Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamen who died in 1323 BCE. One of the murals is of twelve baboons (Figure 9) each watching over one of the twelve hours the king would have to travel to the Afterlife. English zoologist, Desmond Morris discusses these baboons shown in the tomb in his book, *Primate Ethnology* (1969). Morris writes: 'Wild males keeping watch beside the group sit . . . facing away from the group members, but the penis is usually erected' (Morris, 1969, p.150). Morris suggests that in these Baboons, when the males stand guard as a sentry, the erect phallus signifies a power that is more than arousal. The Greek Herms are a similar kind of guardian, conducting wishes and prayers to the gods while bringing safe passage at crossings. Herms were considered apotropaic, meaning they protected against or averted evil, or brought luck and were therefore positioned at points of transition, such as crossroads or

doorways. The form has carried through many centuries. While origins can be traced to ancient Egypt, it began in ancient Greece, was adapted by the Romans and reappeared in the Renaissance as the Term figure, Telamon or Atlantes, was usually represented as half figure or statue and half architecture supporting a doorway, or a roof line.

Hermes hold together several ideas that equal Hermes and his duties and nature. It is these abstract concepts, which perhaps account for the longevity of the form. The herm addresses the anxiety and trepidation of transition, whether it is the transition of a garden—where the chaos of nature has been altered—or as an intermediary when asking for a change of fortune from gods, going from inside to outside of a building, or from life to death, the Herm is the arbiter of providence in these places.

As the Herm form passed through Roman culture the head of Hermes is replaced by a portrait head of, perhaps a public figure or other venerated person. The portraits became full upper bodies or busts, altering the Herm enough to become the Term figure, which is real only elaborately decorative but is an echo of the apotropaic Herm. Even in this shift the form maintains specific attributes and particular, quiet relevance to the enhancement of a place of transition.

The benefit of having worked with the form allows me to have had the experience of understanding it as a multi-part thing. Head, column, and genitals all come together as pieces of a unified object, the Herm. Changing a head or replacing the phallus speaks to us even now. As an example, a recent series of three herms I constructed had abstracted animal skulls as the heads. In place of the genitals I hung respectively a bone, an old spring from a tractor, and an iron gear. The form has parameters and a range of freedom inside those boundaries. While the form of a herm is not well known today, it is recognizable and read as a figure. The objects hung in place of the phallus became phalli. There was a warning about adult content on the door of the gallery although a bone, a spring, and a gear would not have needed caution in most other positions.

This particular transformative power of even the most ambiguous statue is further presented in the Balloon Project in chapter three.

Statue As Corpse

A bronze, life-sized, recumbent statue by Aimé-Jules Dalou marks the grave of Victor Noir in Père-Lachaise Cemetery. Victor Noir the person—was shot and killed in 1870 by Pierre-Napoleon Bonaparte, first cousin to Napoleon III, and the murder aided in precipitating the overthrow of the second empire government in France. Victor Noir the statue was commissioned of Dalou, ‘who was emerging as the official sculptor of the Third Republic’ (Pierre, 2010, p.178), twenty years after Noir was killed, as a monument to the inaugural incident. (Figures 16 and 17).

In her paper published in *Sculpture Journal*, Caterina Pierre quotes journalist Charles Chincholle, who wrote about the inauguration of the tomb and sculpture or gisant,³⁵ or tomb effigy of Victor Noir in 1891, which was twenty-one years after Noir's murder. 'And you see what a statue is! It is a new proof that one can make something great in making something real' Charles Chincholle, as cited in (Pierre, 2010, p.179). The statue of Noir is not a real dead man, or corpse. However, the statue effectively inspires real feelings of sympathy about the idea of Victor Noir, and the circumstances of his death; a life cut short by irresponsible authority, and this stirring of empathy was what the statue was intended to do.

The Victor Noir effigy continues to inspire, even after the specific purpose of the memorial is no longer foremost. The statue is currently visited and touched on the face, in the chest, and on the groin. An informal online survey of graves in Père-Lachaise indicates that one can quickly gain a mate, become pregnant, and enjoy a better sex life by kissing Noir on the lips, rubbing his genital area, and placing flowers in his upturned top hat. An online travel blog indicates Noir's 'popularity is not because of his talent as a journalist, nor his symbolic role in the overthrow of the Second Empire, but lies in the notorious lump in his pants' (2014); although, perhaps it was Dalou's ability to recognize the

³⁵ Gisant: (French; meaning recumbent) a recumbent tomb effigy of the deceased.

indications and abstractions that allowed the figure to perform its duty as a sympathetic martyr.

Pierre's article explores the touching of the genital area and why Dalou may have so endowed the statue through relating emphasized accounts from the time of the murder. Noir was very young and apparently well liked, and was to be married in a few weeks. That Noir's approaching marriage was 'neither consecrated nor consummated' (p.180), is mentioned in some guide books to Père-Lachaise, and this misfortune, also stressed at the time of his murder, may serve to arouse further amorous empathy, as well as suggest the impetus for sexual contact being made with the statue.³⁶ Looking to explanations for the prominent genital area, Pierre first suggests realism.

'in the process of rigor mortis, much of Noir's blood had pooled towards the centre of his body, and, as happens in the natural course of this state without modern embalming practices, Noir's penis filled with blood and may have seemed partially erect during his funeral' (Pierre, 2010, p.180).

She then suggests that Dalou's statue of Noir is 'dressed to the left,'³⁷ which 'could be read as a political statement of the sculptor, of his and the deceased's

³⁶ For example, <http://jaquo.com/scandal-in-the-graveyard-laffaire-victor-noir> AND <http://www.theculturemap.com/victor-noir-sexiest-tomb-pere-lachaise-cemetery/>

³⁷ From *The Desperate Man* blog of Stephen Metcalfe:

Dressing left and dressing right are terms that most men, at least those who wear suits, know. It's a term used by tailors when fitting suit pants. To "dress left" means that one keeps one's male appendage shifted in the general direction of the left trouser leg, likewise, for the right. According to medical researchers, most men *should* dress left. This is basic biology. The left testicle is lower than the right. It was *made* to swing to the

leftist politics, rather than an accurate anatomical representation' (p.181). A political statement is a possibility, but even suggesting it to be an *accurate anatomical representation* of the corpse of Victor Noir, is not likely. The statue was made two decades after Noir's death, and that the 'accurate' version of a man recently murdered in the street would look romantic, elegant, and be conveniently endowed in a manner symbolic of the leftist politics, even at his funeral seems unlikely. Dalou, the sculptor has reimagined Victor Noir's death as pure, romantic, and empathetic.

Dalou's statue is of a dead man, but it is not a dead man. The cause of Noir's death is important to the monument—the wound is even apparent on the statue—but that wound did not kill the statue. While we know this is true, we still easily speak about what rigor mortis does to a penis, and then touch—or more—a hump of bronze knowing it is not a dead man's penis beneath suit pants—which we probably would not be moved to touch were it a real dead man in real pants. Yet we do touch in the abstracted hope that touching a bulge—that is real but is not the result of the real penis of Victor Noir or even the penis of the statue of Victor Noir—will grant us luck in love and all that love brings. This is apotropaic magic, and although we know the statue is not real, we touch anyway.

left. Swinging right is uncomfortable. Perhaps this is why right dressers are often in bad moods.'
(<http://thedesperateman.blogspot.com/2012/07/dressing-left.html>)

In my practice—before embarking on this study, which has served to articulate some of *knowing more than I can tell* as per (Polanyi, 2009, p.4)—witnessing the reactions of others to a nude statue, a herm or even a tractor spring was puzzling from the perspective of making. The studio experience is similar to that in a Life Class, it isn't at all vulgar or even sexual. I still often find what was said about the herms, or "naked" statues embarrassing. Clarifying that the statues or their genitals are not *real* has never worked well in convincing others, but it has had an effect on my recognition of the transformative power of a herm form on say a tractor spring.

A statue in herm form of the Greek god, Priapus, by Scottish Sculptor Alexander Stoddart was erected in Vincent Square, London, 2007, but the phallus is detachable, and is kept in Stoddart's studio. In a 2011 BBC film called *Fig Leaf: Biggest cover up in History*, Stoddart says that 'we cannot erect an entire image of the God [Priapus], we live in a strangely puritanical world now, yet it is overflowing with a hyper sexuality in the most inappropriate places' (Stoddart as quoted in (Smith, 2011, @56:13)). That a statue of Priapus is different from 'inappropriate hyper-sexuality' is a subtle point, yet the statue with phallus is deemed inappropriate for public consumption, although Priapus, himself acceptably stands in Vincent Square.

There is a doubled, parallel nature to touch and the touching of statues. The encounter with statues is to some extent similar to a painting of a figure and to a story about someone, real or imagined, in that there is someone designated, but not at hand. The difference statues summon is that there is an object present, with the difficulties and dimensions objects present. Pierre argues in her conclusion 'that the human impulse to touch sculpture is not only innate, primal and sexual, but is also often linked to one's making a physical connection with something magical or spiritual' (Pierre, 2010, p.181). In this case, the something magical or spiritual is the abstracted concept of Victor Noir, an idea about youth and love, hope and politics.

The French writer and philosopher Maurice Blanchot writes about the strangeness of writing. He argues that words are abstract concepts that probably inhibit our understanding of the world 'just as the image seems to be the absence of the object' (Blanchot, 1982, p.47). We are used to the absence of the object that drives or empowers our idea about it. This points to touch and statues having a more curious relationship than actual touching of the material or even the concept of tactility appear to incorporate. Furthermore, speaking about touching statues appears to reveal more about our concepts of hope, fear, and desire than about the materials we touch.

Blanchot considers that in reading, the words, the writer, and the writing are lost. The story exceeds—or differs—from the words it is made of, and neither

refers to the writer nor to itself. He writes—under the heading *The Statue Glorifies the Marble*—about ‘The obscurity of this presence which escapes comprehension’ (Blanchot, 1982, p.223). He goes on to point out that we suppose the material is the statue, we are confused by the duality— the material (real) and the form (not real)—of its presence:

—all this we try to bear in mind and define appropriately by saying: the work *is* eminently *what* it is made of. It is what makes its nature and its matter visible or present, it is the glorification of its reality: (p.223)

We lose sight of the full implication of the object by defining it as the material it is made of or the person shape it exhibits. Blanchot considers the object (or the art) to exceed or differ from the materials it is made of. He too uses the example of money—writing that coins are not the raw metal from which they are cast—they have become something different. Blanchot says it is the material disappearing into money or the marble disappearing into a statue which points to what money is or a statue is. There is something similar in Blanchot’s indication of the *disappearing into* that echos the *something more* of Lucian Freud. That *disappearing into*—here defining statue—is a concept acknowledged but not defined. However, when Blanchot writes ‘the work makes what disappears in the object appear’ (p.223), he is arguing that the materials bring forward what the object is, material is a key component of the statue but the marble or material is not the statue.

By saying this we are still attempting to indicate what distinguishes the work from the object and from productive undertakings in general. For in the usual object (this much we know), matter itself is of no particular interest; and the more the matter that made it made it right for its use—the more the material is appropriate—the more it nears nothingness. And eventually all objects become immaterial, a volatile force in the swift circuit of exchange, the evaporated support of action, which is itself pure becoming (Blanchot, 1982, p.223).

When material is shaped like a person and we consider the implications of the person shape alone, we miss the material. When we speak of the material, we miss what the form advances.³⁸ The ‘material is appropriate’ to artist and context or practical concerns, the form differs from the material but is also tied to it. Here again is the *real* of the material (and the statue) and the *not real* of the form bound together. It is in the *disappearing into*, in that seam between the two, that there is an indication of what a statue is.

Finally, Blanchot speaks about the body after death or as a corpse as something both present and absent, or real and not real. This similarly dual nature of the corpse reflects the way we speak about the Victor Noir gisant as both real and not real or that Victor Noir is designated by the statue, but neither the man nor his corpse are at hand.

And we might bear in mind the thought that idealism has, finally, no guarantee other than a corpse. For this indicates to what extent the apparent intellectual refinement, the pure virginity of the image is originally linked to the elemental strangeness and to the formless weight of being, present in absence’ *The Space of Literature* (Blanchot, 1982, p.258).

³⁸ Heidegger speaks about this as thingly-ness in *Origin of The Work of Art*. (Heidegger, 2006)

A man's corpse is not a living man, it is a likeness of the living man. The corpse is no longer the living man although it is literally his image. This is carried out further in a statue. For example, the Victor Noir gisant is not the corpse of Victor Noir, nor a copy of Victor Noir the actual man or corpse, at all. A mold was not made of the corpse and cast into bronze (although, this underscores the difference between life cast and statue). It is not a portrait of Victor Noir, though it is a representation, or an effigy of him. There are two issues here, one about materials and objects, and one, pertinent at this point, which is that Victor Noir the statue is not Victor Noir the man, but the statue is real, and continues to carry its own powers or meaning, or mimesis of larger life issues separate from Noir and Dalou.

It is perhaps, Dalous' ability as a sculptor that makes the continued purpose of the statue possible. Art copying life is not what Dalou has achieved however. Dalou has made a better than real copy of life. The statue representing the elegantly composed dead body of Victor Noir, and the corpse of Victor Noir have very little in common except a thin veil of our consideration, allowing the statue to become, or stand in for the corpse. Furthermore, while the politics that were once the motivation for the statue do have contemporary parallels, they are no longer what primarily draws people to the statue, or informs their interest in it. It is almost certainly not the reason the statue is touched. That Noir was young, and to be married when he was murdered, that he is presented in a vulnerable position and that guide books to Pere-Lachaise mention this,

and that ³⁹ ‘Many women who come to the tomb, sit on the statue, a rite which is supposed to bring them a good lover within a year’ or that, ‘It is said that by rubbing this area and leaving a flower in Noir’s hat, a woman is guaranteed a husband within the year’ best explains the motivation for touching the statue of Victor Noir’s corpse.⁴⁰

Mimesis

³⁹ ‘This statue has since become something of a fertility symbol. Due to the naturalistic style of the sculpture there is a rather prominent fold in Noir’s trousers, which make him appear to be aroused. It is said that by rubbing this area and leaving a flower in Noir’s hat, a woman is guaranteed a husband within the year. While the rest of the statue is covered with verdigris, Noir’s crotch gleams, proving the popularity of this particular myth’ (<http://listverse.com/2011/10/27/top-10-fascinating-graves-in-pre-lachaise/>) ‘A destiny of the journalist from the 19th century, Victor Noir was sad. He died when he was 21 years old, being a messenger to the prince Bonaparte who killed him without any reason. This event was a last drop in the full glass, an uprising started which lead to the Parisian Commune. During the Parisian Commune there were fights also in the Père Lachaise cemetery, since the cemetery was built on a hill. More than 200,000 people came to the funeral of Victor Noir. The statue on his tomb is very *masculine*, it represents his youth, his strength. Victor Noir was about to get married when he died. Many women who come to the tomb, sit on the statue, a rite which is supposed to bring them a good lover within a year. And so the statue of Victor Noir has become a touching place such as Dalida’s breast on Montmartre or the foot of Montaigne by Sorbonne’ (<http://www.paristep.com/en/articles/life/lachaise.html>).

⁴⁰ Dalou has another gisant that has been described this way:

In the ninety-first division of Paris’s Per Lachaise cemetery, the tomb of August Blanqui shivers with an undercurrent of angst-riddled vigor. A bronze funerary shroud covers the sculpted body of the controversial revolutionary, responding with folds and wrinkles to the angles and undulations of Blanqui’s pained frame. His lean right arm, vitalized by its throbbing musculature, emerges from the cloth, extending beyond the space defined by the sculpture’s simple rectangular plinth. Blanqui’s head falls jarringly backward and to the right. An engorged vein swells in the center of the revolutionary’s forehead. His seemingly animated body and psyche complicate his presumably posthumous state. (Eschelbacher, 2016, p.299)

(See Figure 18)

August Blanqui was also part of deposing Napoleon III, and although there are other similarities to the gisant of Victor Noir, Blanqui is not touched or visited as often or as intentionally. (*His seemingly animated body and psyche complicate his presumably posthumous state*) Just to be clear, this is a description of bronze, which is mostly shaped like cloth with a person shape underneath.

Westminster Abbey houses the remains of elaborate funeral effigies⁴¹ of kings, queens, and royalty from about 1327 (Edward II) through 1625 (James I), when the formal practice of using an effigy at these funerals was replaced with a 'crown on a tasselled purple velvet cushion' (Harvey & Mortimer, 1994, p.17). The use of these funeral effigies is specific and limited. The effigies were in place of the body for the funeral and transition of power, but remained at Westminster Abby to be stored unceremoniously,⁴² their function concluded. The statues had a prescribed and limited use, and were not permitted to take on a public life of their own, as Victor Noir has, as this would be counter to their prescribed use.

Michael Davis, a translator of and commentator on Aristotle writes that Aristotle's *Poetics* is mimetic in that while it is apparently about poetry, it is also an 'explanation of ourselves to ourselves' (Davis, 1999, p.3). Davis explains Aristotelian mimesis as an abstraction or embellishment of the object it is aimed at. The object is singled out and highlighted in a way uncommon to everyday experience.

⁴¹ 'Making an extravagantly turned out and convincing effigy to stand in for the anointed and therefore more than human royal person suggested that although dead, the King is not gone or powerless. The coffin contained the earthly remains, while the effigy suggested the divine body, (Harvey & Mortimer, 1994, p.4), as well as aiding in avoiding the experience of a transi body in public, and intimidating and maintaining a strength through sumptuous display of wealth and power any usurpation plot through a potentially vulnerable transition.

⁴² The head, in particular, of the effigy of Henry the VII is attributed to the sculptor Pietro Torrigiano to whom the terracotta bust of Henry VII in the Victoria and Albert Museum is also attributed. Torrigiano was a (wonderful and moving) sculptor working primarily in terracotta during the Renaissance. He was apparently banished from Florence for breaking Michelangelo's nose when they were both students. His banishment perhaps influenced the attitude and set the tone for sculpture, particularly in terms of materials, of the Italian Renaissance.

Imitation always involves selecting something from the continuum of experience, thus giving boundaries to what really has no beginning or end. Mimêsis involves a framing of reality that announces that what is contained within the frame is not simply real. Thus the more “real” the imitation the more fraudulent it becomes (Davis, 1999, p.3).

A statue, a gisant, or effigy of the corpse of a person is mimetic, but rarely an exacting replica. However, in 1967 artist Paul Thek made a statue of a corpse as part of a work called *Tomb*. Thek life-cast his own hands and face, and created an effigy of himself dressed in a pink suit. The statue was reportedly placed inside a pink tomb, surrounded by drug use paraphernalia. As he was making the piece, he was photographed with the casts of himself; creating an image of himself and his figure, or documentation that Thek himself was not the corpse. (Figure 8).

Whitney Museum curator, Elizabeth Sussman, spoke about Thek’s piece in an interview, during a 2010 retrospective of his work, saying that:

There is no doubt that by casting his own body he had some sense of what it was to make a funerary monument of himself; and therefore, the Peter Hujar photographs that you see, have an uncanny quality to them because you see the very much alive Thek in his tee-shirt, next to this dead effigy that is exactly him. So to come so close as to be able to touch your own dead body even if you’re doing it through your own imagination, is very,

very risky territory and that's where he wanted to be with his art.⁴³

Life casting to make a statue of a corpse seems exactly right. The direct cast of the body is only the body, although Thek only cast his face and hands. In October 2014 I constructed a similar effigy of myself. It was displayed on the top shelf of a glassed vitrine, with a transi or skeletal image below cast from a skull carved from a cast of my head. The piece became part of a larger work made with artist Mary Morgan, for a show called *Trivial Pursuits: Obsession's Allure*. The choice to use my own image came about primarily because I had moulds of my own face and hands available to cast from, as well as my own worn out shoes, but I was not completely comfortable making a corpse of someone else, either.⁴⁴ I used a life cast of my face, matching it with my hands and a pair of my battered boots.

The object I made had a head and hands that were my form and the boots were ones I had worn out, and yet it was not me. Although the figure was never confused with a real corpse, the vitrine was moved from the front of the gallery because the curator particularly found it disturbing. Although the statue was a real object, it was not a real corpse, yet it was disturbing enough to be moved to

⁴³ Dialog from the Whitney Museum of Art video TOMB! (In conjunction with a retrospective of Thek's work at the Whitney 2010)00:33-1:09 Whitney Museum of American Art. TOMB! The art work, was shown at the Whitney in 1968, but was later lost.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Pr4TjYZjS4>

⁴⁴ Others were readily available to cast, but I did not like the idea of making the life cast of someone else—even a pretend corpse—a feeling I did not have about myself. I knew it was not *my* body, but would I know it was not theirs? I further did not want to make a choice of whom to cast, as it was not a specific part of the meaning of the piece.

a less prominent location in the gallery. While I constructed the figure in the gallery, and was present at the decision to relocate the vitrine, the statue or gisant quietly indicated something stronger, the suggestion of a corpse that my actual living presence did not relieve. (Image 1).

I had no trepidation or difficulty with the figure. The territory did not seem risky, perhaps because, for me, it is well trodden. I have taken many life casts from my own body (and many other peoples bodies as well), and subsequently used my own—albeit altered—face and hands in many statues. I have studied anatomy, which, among other lessons, has involved dissection of corpses. This experience, to some degree, allows me to be particularly aware of the differences between life cast corpse and a true corpse, just as a statue and real person differ. While the piece was a kind of petrified, or preserved corpse image, I never felt it to be my own corpse, although I did avoid using a cast other than my own. The original intent was to speak about preservation and incorruptibility after death as obsession, however I also witnessed the authority of the image of a corpse to discomfit and distress, even when it is constructed from plastic wrap, old clothes, a wig, and fired clay life casts of a specifically living and present person.

A durable concern in sculpture, particularly in the nineteenth century, was actuality. It is described by David Getsy as ‘the potential for equivalence between sculptural representation and the material constitution of sculpture as

an object' (Getsy, 2005, p.75). Actuality is well played out in the pairing of a romanticized body of the memorial gisant of the poet Shelley (1893) by Edward Onslow Ford (Figure 20), with the stillness and colour of the marble. It is conceptually ideal and satisfying, but the criticism that followed the piece (and Ford's work, generally) was that Ford made portraits, that he copied his models and held too closely to a copy of the body, and that Ford did not employ abstraction or idealism toward his intentions. The reports of finding Shelley's body were that he was completely clothed—including boots. The writer John Edward Trelawney describes finding Shelley's body:

The face and hands, and parts of the body not protected by the dress, were fleshless. The tall, slight figure, the jacket, the volume of Sophocles in one pocket, and Keats's poems in the other, doubled back, as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away, were all too familiar to me to leave a doubt on my mind that this mutilated corpse was any other than Shelley's. (Trelawny, 1858, p.123).

There is perhaps a misunderstanding of where the abstraction, or idealism Ford employed in this piece lies, but his work was criticized all the same.

Nudity

(Critias speaking to Socrates about Charmides)

'That men of my age should have been affected in this way was natural enough, but I noticed that even the small boys fixed their eyes upon him and no one of them, not even the littlest, looked at anyone else, but all gazed at him as if he were a statue' (Plato, 1992, p.59).

Ian Jenkins, senior curator of ancient Greek collections at the British Museum, points out that ‘the Greek *kouros* was a mannekin, or formulaic figure, composed to exhibit the essential elements of ideal manhood’ (Jenkins & Turner, 2009, p.11). The anatomy is not mimetic, but idealized to underscore a point about the possession of *Arete* or physical and moral perfection. In ancient Greek art it is usually the Greek warriors who are naked and victorious, their enemies defeated, clothed, and ashamed.

That we are faced with naked statues is probably from Greek tradition but naked statues are not always acceptable. When in the Renaissance naked male statues made a brief reappearance, such as Michelangelo’s *David*, 1504 and *Risen Christ*, 1521, the nudity was deliberate and symbolic. The *Risen Christ* is a nude, and recently resurrected Christ. He is perfect and naked to express that he is—like Adam before the fall—sinless. This Christ had the stigmata added later, and was made modest in the eighteenth century by a bronze loincloth, suggesting that even a sinless, marble penis is too difficult to contemplate. In the eighteenth century, the nude statues of Greece were being dug up and rediscovered, having, as Henry James observed, ‘survi[ved] their long earthly obscurity in this perfect shape, and coming up like long-lost divers from the sea of time’ (James, 1883, p.163). They continue to quietly influence our perception of perfection, the figure and statues.

Further examining the effect of the naked statue, Calvin Tompkins wrote in the New Yorker Magazine about sculptor Charles Ray.⁴⁵ Ray was commissioned by the Whitney Museum in New York to make a statue for the public plaza at its new location. He dutifully began work on *Huck and Jim*, two characters standing side by side, from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, (1884). Jim is 'nine feet tall, a handsome black man in the prime of life' (Tomkins, 2015, p.54), and Huck who is fourteen year old boy. Both figures are nude as they are in the story. Ray told Tomkins he believes the author, Mark Twain, is the American Homer and that Huck Finn is the equivalent Ulysses. Ray showed his design to the director and the curator of the Whitney, Donna De Salvo and Adam Weinberg respectively, and both felt the piece promised to be 'a great work of art' (Tomkins, 2015, p.58). Currently, writes Tompkins, the site in front of the museum has been 'ruled out because passers-by would have to look at full-frontal male genitalia' (p.58). The Whitney eventually declined the statues altogether out of a 'growing concern that . . . a naked African-American male and a naked white teenager in close proximity' (p.56) would be an affront to a New York public. The nine-foot, over-life scale, the cast stainless steel material, and even Getsy's noted *passive resistance* of statues, which further argues for the impossibility of physical threat, were not enough to secure the commission.

The statue is not a person, therefore a statue's nudity—a taboo we oddly extend to statues but not to dogs or horses or other animals—will never be

⁴⁵ New Yorker Magazine, Profiles, MAY 11, 2015 ISSUE, *Meaning Machines, The sculptures of Charles Ray*. By Calvin Tomkins

anything other than a conceptual or intellectual danger. The genitalia of a statue are equally as still and unlikely to move as the body, yet Ray's figures appear to pose a threat to passers-by in New York City, where, presumably, passers-by have been exposed to less considered images. I designed a small project to investigate reactions to the nudity of statues, and to perhaps discover how abstracted genitalia could be made and still be realized. I began by showing pictures of nude female statues, for example, Rodin's *Crouching Woman*, Gaston Lachaise's *Standing Woman*, several Ancient Greek examples to several people. The pictures were usually received well and stories or opinions about the work would follow. I then handed around a bag of balloons and asked the participant(s) to take one, and everyone was asked to say what it was: An *un-blown-up balloon*, was the most common answer. I then showed the same series of pictures with a balloon Photoshopped onto it. (Figures 21-24)

In most cases, the balloon would be put down or dropped, and reactions ranged from disgusted to amused. The balloon had been altered. The real balloon in hand was the same but now somehow embarrassing to hold. The concept or idea of the real balloon was transformed through suggestion, the real balloon remained the same.

Scottish sculptor Sandy Stoddart suggests that speaking about art—especially where the context and meaning of artworks require explanation—is a kind of iconoclasm, and that it is a means through which we lose sight of the object we

may be speaking about. Stoddart is uncomfortable particularly with sculpture that needs words to situate it, saying that ‘it is very dangerous when you start talking about art, because sooner or later you’ll find yourself seeing with your ears’ (2014, @2:09). Language, perhaps through calling on our ideas and assumptions, transforms objects for us in a way that is akin to seeing balloons Photoshopped onto a statue; while still just a balloon, it has also become something less comfortable to hold, although the balloon itself has not changed at all.

The encounter shifts from the object outside in the world into ourselves. Stoddart argues that a statue particularly is ‘famously still, no matter what you do you can’t get a reaction out of it’ (@6:20), statues are ‘never joining in’ (@7:13), or explaining themselves, which leaves us without an *inter-action*. We get no response. In this way a statue ‘commits sins against life’ (Stoddart, 2014, @8:07), they are a ‘still thing’ and they do not take part, which we require of others, although not of objects. Stoddart claims encounters with sculpture or the aesthetic experience ‘stills the will’ (@3:26)—as per philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer⁴⁶—and counteracts and defies the imperative of the will to life, which compounds the ‘sin’ of the graven image.

⁴⁶ For Arthur Schopenhauer the will to life is the cause of our difficulties in a way similar to Buddhist philosophy. Schopenhauer suggested two ways to rise above the will to life were a complete rejection of society, which suited only some, and the contemplation of art, or aesthetic experience.

‘It is especially these natural means of furthering the cerebral nervous activity which bring it about, certainly so much the better the more developed and energetic in general the brain is, that the object separates itself ever more from the subject, and finally introduces the state of pure objectivity of perception, which of itself eliminates the will from consciousness, and in which all things stand before us with

I have experienced a statue in an art context as offensive or perhaps aggressive. In 1995, I saw Jake and Dinos Chapman's *Zygotic Acceleration, Biogenetic, De-Sublimated Libidinal Model (enlarged x 1000)* (Figure 25) and it was difficult for me to look at. I judged it harshly. When I revisited the piece for this study, I initially found it unsettling, but I read a bit of an interview with the Chapman brothers about the piece:

This thing is inanimate, it's made from resin and paint. It bears 90% relationship to a mannequin, and maybe less than 10% to things that you can buy in Ann Summers. There's no point at which you can say this is a little girl. It might look like a child from the back, but from the front it doesn't. And then the idea that something with an erect p*nis on its nose could ever be female is also another problem...

The whole point of these objects was actually to back people into a corner with their strange morality. You make an object and put it in a gallery and people don't really see it; they see what they think about things reflected in the object. You might as well put a mirror in the gallery because they're not looking at the object. It's an attempt to force people to take into account their bad thinking. '*Zygotic acceleration...*,' for example, it doesn't work if you say it's a child or it's children; I've never seen 20 children fused together with adult gen*talia on their faces (Chapman, 2007, p.3)

This writing about the sculpture altered my experience of it, and in a way that I found useful. My attention was shifted to the actual object and away

increased clearness and distinctness, so that we are conscious almost only of them and scarcely at all of ourselves; thus our whole consciousness is almost nothing more than the medium through which the perceived object appears in the world as an idea. Thus it is necessary for pure, will-less knowledge that the consciousness of ourselves should vanish, since the consciousness of other things is raised to such a pitch' (Schopenhauer, 2012, p.126).

from myself. My judgments were played back to me, and I was given an opportunity to amend and consider my position.

The Turner Prize-winning potter Grayson Perry pointed out in his third Reith Lecture⁴⁷ that, all the things ‘that were once seen as subversive and dangerous, like tattoos and piercings and drugs and interracial sex, fetishism’ (Perry, 2013, p.7), have become normal and fit for family viewing in movies and TV. He says there is one thing you won’t be shown, though, ‘underarm hair. The last truly dangerous thing’ (p.7). Perry points out that our position—or thinking about what is dangerous and subversive—changes, the acts do not. It is about the fashion or current mode of thinking, not specifically the piercings, the drugs or the sex. That this morality can be played out through statues positions them as objects to which we extend some of the social taboos and attitudes indicating that we both understand and do not understand the object. A statue is not a person and cannot be naked. We are offering it rights we usually reserve for ourselves. We don’t put pants on dogs or tables or horses, but statues are covered and made modest. Naked objects, or statues without pants are too much to ask of passers-by to have to look at.

Affect

⁴⁷ Reith Lectures 2013: *Playing To The Gallery* Presenter: Grayson Perry Lecture 3: Nice Rebellion: Welcome In, Recorded at The Guildhall, Londonderry TRANSMISSION: 29th OCTOBER 2013 RADIO 4

In Puppeteer and Director Roman Paska's *Dead Puppet Talk*, Actor Bill Irwin as the Puppet Talker says, 'this thing we call a puppet is meant to interpret, not simulate, reality' (Paska, 2009). That puppets interpret reality, but are not real, suggests that there is a reflected quality about the puppet that we can recognize as ourselves. We read and interpret the feelings and behaviour of puppets. While we usually consider that we can witness what happens to others and feel empathy for or the feelings of those others, this is not the case with puppets. Beyond dismissing this as simple anthropomorphizing, affect theory (as per Teresa Brennan, (Brennan, 2004) and others (Gregg, 2010) ⁴⁸) suggests that there is a kind of transmission of feeling that is empathic and that does not originate specifically from within us.

⁴⁸ The more recent affective turn has been described as privileging, 'human and animal bodies, sensation, and potentiality' (Mian, 2011). Susan Kozel, a professor of new media at Malmö University and a dancer, says in her video, 'Phenomenology In Five Acts, that affect is liminal, that it is what is conveyed in between gestures, [that affect is a] shimmer or ripple' (Kozel, 2013). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes about affect as 'aspects of experience and reality that do not present themselves in propositional or even in verbal form alongside others that do' (Sedgwick, 2002, p.6). In *Cruel Optimism*, Lauren Berlant talks about 'the affective structure of an optimistic attachment,' which outlines the tendency to do the same thing over and over and expect different results, 'to expect that this time, nearness to this thing will help you or a world to become different in just the right way' (Berlant, 2011, p.2). The 2010 Affect Theory Reader editors open with this definition of affect.

Affect is in many ways synonymous with force or forces of encounter. The term 'force,' however, can be a bit of a misnomer, since affect need not be especially forceful (although sometimes, as in the psychoanalytic study of trauma, it is). In fact, it is quite likely that affect more often transpires within and across the subtlest of shuttling intensities: all the miniscule or molecular events of the unnoticed. The ordinary and its extra. Affect is born in in-between-ness and resides as accumulative beside-ness. (Gregg, 2010, p.2)

It may be useful to note here that an initial focus as I began this study was affect. I assumed it was a means to suggest how feeling and emotions might be transmitted without being specifically generated by an object. I eventually found affect to be too insubstantial a subject to be useful in concretizing a position for what happens when we encounter a statue.

Speaking at a UK conference focused on Live Interface, Paska notes that the subject of magic is often used in place of something more specific. Paska says,

The area of magic that is most important to puppet theatre is the notion of magic as an *affective science*. Magic is meant to have an effect, so when you perform an act of magic the idea is that something *will* happen, not maybe. Like when you flick the light switch, the light goes on. (Paska, 2016, pp.7:00)

He continues, advancing that puppetry is related to statuary, and iconic representations of the Gods, and that it is a very old form of theatre. The role of the puppeteer is as an intermediary between the gods and the human community, the puppeteer is part of the mechanism of transmission or transferral between them. (Paska, 2016).

Similarly, affect is defined principally in terms of bodily *communication*, and although it appears to be comparable to emotions or feelings, affect is not interior or personal in the way our feelings are. Feelings, writes Philosopher Teresa Brennan are 'sensations that have found the right match in words' (Brennan, 2004, p.5). Feelings are brought about by thought through sensory input, and lead to action. Affects, on the other hand, are not feelings. Affects interject from outside of us and are much more basic and raw. While affect is considered *transmittable* from one body to another, for example, in the way one can feel another's sadness, or anger running through a mob or crowd of people. Affect is intrinsically, physically unrepresentable, making it difficult to specifically characterize and to isolate it from feeling or emotion.

According to Brennan, affect is primarily transmitted by an interpretation of feelings, suggesting that the source of the feelings is significant. She argues that when affect is transmitted, whether it is anxiety, fear, pleasure or anger, that our biochemistry is altered. She writes that this is measurable in hormone levels detectable in blood. She means we literally carry the influence of the other in our blood. Interestingly, she then writes that the best source of love and living attention which moderate the influence of affect would be: 'To find an utterly pure soul within, something untouched by human error, one would have to sustain living attention through a process of complete exsanguination' (Brennan, 2004, p.139).

Positioning puppets as endowed with a perfect and exsanguinated nature, Paska recounts in his essay, *The Inanimate Incarnate* (Paska, 1990), an 1810 essay about the puppet theatre by Heinrich von Kleist. Von Kleist posits puppets to be superior to human dancers. The puppet has no conflicted human soul to inhibit, so when it dances, the dance is pure dance⁴⁹. 'The spirit cannot err where there is none' (von Kleist as quoted in Paska) (p.417). He indicates that the exsanguinated—the puppet or sculptural body—is unassailable and pure in purpose. This superior otherness is, perhaps, part of the puppet or the statue's attraction. Statues and puppets are uncompromised by blood, they are

⁴⁹ Kleist is also quoted in Hersey, *Falling In Love With Statues* (pp.141-42)

ideal and ultimately unaffected by us, though we are moved and altered by them.

Comay writes that no actual eye contact can be either represented by the sculpture or sustained between work and spectator, 'the statue relinquishes the gaze precisely because it has no need of it' (Comay, 2014, p.135). Statues do not need to rebuff our gaze or actions, or protect themselves or their goals, ambitions or fantasies. In this respect the sculptural body is superior to us in its singleness of purpose.

Statues as a form and a subject respond to deeper consideration of how we perceive them particularly in terms of our senses and conceptually. Reflecting on touch, or death, or the curious aspect of ourselves that touches the crotch of Dalou's gisant—an object that both is and is not actually what we are touching (and we know it isn't) to get our heart's desire—suggests that our encounter is subtly compound. It is easy to overlook the complexities of behaviour we exhibit when we encounter statues. Touching statues, given the nature of touch, does not fully consider what a statue is. A statue is exactly not the material it is made of. It is the form of the material, which, for example, suggests that marble is a statue. It is both marble and figure shaped. However, the figure cannot be said to be the marble and the marble is not the figure.

Touching and tactility exemplify the material and form of statues. The material of the object and what we see as the appearance or representation of a statue. Statues as objects are veiled from us, but in plain sight. We see them as simulacra or shallow, empty replica of us. We have thousands of years of collective history with objects shaped like us that accompany our encounters with them. We encounter statues with experience and history, both personal and social. We are quick to judge some anatomy to be incorrectly sized while oblivious to the abstraction of other appendages. We easily equate the shape of a person to be a person—a lesser person—we can easily know and dismiss, when we also know that these objects have nothing but form in common with us. We know a statue is not a dead person, and we know statues do not actually have a gender—that goes beyond the surface—nor can they see or move. Statues are not people in any way other than form. Statues interpret and reveal this encounter to ourselves, but they do not really simulate much about us at all. They can more correctly be said to stimulate us to thoughts both considered and deep or habitual and usual. Statues are objects that are *real* and *not real* at once, perhaps making them a third kind of object, one that has the capacity to endure and enrich questions about our perceptions.

CHAPTER 2

Encounter

This chapter begins with a brief descriptive overview of my studio practice and its evolution and locates my work, both material and form, and practice contemporarily. The encounter is explored through materials and through considering statues historically. The overall approach to both the work and the theory is demonstrated through methods already functioning in the studio, enhanced by an understanding and application of reflective and diffractive methods as understood through Donald Schön and Karen Barad respectively. The aim of this chapter is to articulate, and argue from an augmented

perspective, how my practice has both informed me about encounters with statues as art objects and how the methods and practice have further informed and shaped this study.

My Studio Practice

Sculptor Antony Gormley says of his own studio that it 'is in the world, but not of it'⁵⁰ (2014, @2:10). The framing or boundaries set out by the physical equipment and agreed conventions of my studio, are a world in which a particular bordered and specific practice takes place. The studio is the centre of my practice and mediates my work primarily with clay and the other materials I employ. The space informs actions through years of small choices and specific decisions. I have brought my history, my skills and education, and the record of my interactions with the world to the studio.

In the early 1980s, I attended Boston University's School for the Arts, an art school that focused on the figure. I learned anatomy and learned to knowledgeably draw and comprehend, and to construct the figure in a western, classical tradition of transforming a clay model up, making a mould to plaster, then to wax, and finally to bronze or another material more permanent than the wax or clay original. In this tradition it is the form alone that is of importance,

⁵⁰ Quote from *What Do Artists DO All Day?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ8UAILQv6A> (2:10)

materials are used in service to the final piece, which is a cast, and is specifically not the material in which the piece was originally made.

This training left me skilled, but ill equipped to work on my own. I subsequently attended the Worcester Center For Crafts, a craft school where I trained in ceramics. Clay quickly proved a worthy sculpture medium for me in itself, as well as a compelling agent⁵¹ for constructing the figure. I wanted to work alone,⁵² and to build at a relatively large scale. Clay and ceramic tradition allowed me to organize a studio in which I could do both. I earned an MFA from Massachusetts College of Art in 1995, where my subject was the figure, my medium was ceramics, and I worked inside a contemporary sculpture department. I taught both sculpture and ceramics at Mass Art, and ceramic sculpture at Harvard University Office for the Arts.

I have conducted an active studio practice since 1988 and continued with clay and the figure. I have had a variety of studios in schools, co-ops, and buildings of my own, and since 1991 my studios have been set up for ceramics. I make my own clay and glazes with dry materials bought through a ceramic supply house and fire my own work. I also have a wheel and a changing number of moulds. In addition to ceramics, my current studio also supports small welding, forging

⁵¹ From the Bible: O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; Isaiah 64:8
From the Quran: And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. 23:12; From Greek mythology, Prometheus created man from clay; from Chinese mythology Nüwa molded figures from the yellow earth. Etc . . .

⁵² Working alone allowed me to work out ideas and forms neither tradition supported.

and cutting of steel, as well as moulds and a mixer for concrete, and the capacity for plaster.

I work alone, I do not direct others to make, and therefore physically I am a part of the limitation of the studio. I am not able to, for example, arrive in Berlin⁵³ from Louisiana on a three-week course and make my work. I am a part of my studio and my work comes from the studio. I could, of course, set up a studio in Berlin. This would require tools and space and electricity and kilns and other machinery. It would take a month or so, and I could begin to make work, which would take a few further months, but it is possible. While this arrangement is not unusual for an artist, by identifying and articulating this aspect of my practice in particular I am made aware that the studio, comprised of its various tools, machines, and materials, is the primary tool of my practice and is of corresponding importance. The studio is as important to my practice as I am. I cannot make my work without the studio.

Situating Work and Practice

An argument can be made for my statues being appropriately defined as sculpture in the present through Art Critic and Theorist Rosalind Krauss' definition of sculpture in her article *Sculpture In The Expanded Field*, (1979). Krauss, writing about what constituted sculpture before her concept of the expanded field, suggests that our perception of sculpture is that of the

⁵³ The residency requirement for this course was: three one-week sessions in New York City, and three three-week sessions in Berlin.

monument, or a 'commemorative representation' (Krauss, 1979, p.33), where the work is specific to the site and 'speaks in a symbolic tongue about the meaning or use of that place' (p.33). Further, she addresses the importance of the pedestal as a mediator between the place and the sculpture as the 'representational sign' (p.33). As is the case with monuments, the statue that is part of a monument becomes a focal point for the literal *embodiment* of commemoration.

Jacey Fortin reports in her New York times article: *Toppling Monuments, a Visual History* (2017), which documents several notable statues being unseated, that in Manhattan a statue of King George III was torn down in 1776, as the American revolution came to a close. Statues of the disgraced Josef Stalin were removed by the Russian people, and confederate statues—as monuments to post-reconstruction racism—in New Orleans and other parts of the US are also being removed.⁵⁴ While a monument can be a statue, a statue does not have to be commemorative, or a monument. Krauss suggests that the 'logic of the monument' (p.34) is done away with through the loss of the specific site of commemorative representation. It is through the redemption of the pedestal, as something other than mediator between site and sculpture that modernism

⁵⁴ New Orleans is working to remove confederate monuments <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/apr/24/new-orleans-takes-down-confederate-monuments> as are the rest of the United States. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-virginia-protests-statues/u-s-cities-step-up-removal-of-confederate-statues-despite-virginia-violence-idUSKCN1AV0XE> . Statues of Stalin were also removed in the Soviet Union.

arrives and sculpture can be declared 'nomadic' and therefore free from place or monument.

My work is not commissioned and is not a monument, nor is it tied to any particular site. The pedestals I make, rather than tie the work to a site, announce the work as self-contained and, while in our world, the figures are not of us or of our *world*, which indicates they are not meant to deceive but to reveal. The pedestal is not separate from the piece. Often it is a hemisphere, which suggests a world apart from ours. Furthermore, the feet of my statues are anchored to the base or pedestal, which then only mediates between the figure and the ground or floor in our *world*, rather than the specific site in which the work is displayed. My work is nomadic, although it is heavy and awkward to move around, it is not pinned to a particular site, nor is it ever made only for gallery or garden or other place. My work does not specifically belong anywhere, except my studio, although it becomes a burden there once it is finished.

My work is, as Krauss describes in her initial diagram (p.36), both not-landscape and not-architecture and therefore, it is sculpture. It is sculpture separated from landscape and architecture. My statues do express the fragment, which Krauss suggests 'also testifies to a loss of site' (p.37), where she has indicated the body as site. An example of this fragmenting or abstracting of the body is shown in Image 2 and Image 3 (Pp. III and IV). The body of the tall figure (26) is held up by a cage or skirt and has no human lower

half, and the shoulders and upper arms of the *Old Man* figure (27) are also not human. Each statue only retains a fragment of similarity to a human body. However, the statues I make maintain the history and form of sculpture once tied to both landscape and architecture although they are constructed as isolated objects, and not actual or even conceptual fragments removed from either. While my work does not fall comfortably into any of the other categories of Krauss' expanded field (site-construction, axiomatic structures, or marked site), it does argue for an expansion of Krauss' original sculpture category in the expanded field. This is how my work and practice can be said to occupy a position in the contemporary.

Craft

Writer James Lord recounted the following conversation as having taken place between himself and Artist Alberto Giacometti, when Lord sat for Giacometti in 1964.

I said, "It's difficult for me to imagine how things must appear to you."

"That's exactly what I'm trying to do," he said, "to show how things appear to me."

"But what," I asked, "is the relation between your vision, the way things appear to you, and the technique that you have at your disposal to translate that vision into something which is visible to others?"

"That's the whole drama," he said. "I don't have such a technique." (Lord, 2015 reprint, p.44) and (Turchi, 2004, p.172)

Here, Giacometti confesses to the well-documented⁵⁵ restless drama he endured through supposing he had no (or not enough) technique with which to show how things appeared to him. Bearing in mind that technique, while it can become a dull rut if ill used, is the *translation* process of the urge to make into a satisfactory harvest and is a significant facet of making. Technique, (or a way forward in the studio and freedom from the critical self to work)⁵⁶ becomes the crucial device or contrivance of my artistic practice⁵⁷.

Through technique I enter the studio oriented; I am ready to skilfully engage familiar material at a level where we—the materials and I—move beyond what I can think about alone, without the collaboration. Technique is the possibility of moving beyond my *vision*, to something *visible to others*. Technique, as it has manifested in my studio, is an important tool for the making I do; specifically, the value of the historical craft of both the figure and clay in my practice, although I adhere to neither as a defining title or practice.

⁵⁵ 'Giacometti's art was thought to powerfully capture the tone of melancholy, alienation and loneliness that these ideas suggested' (Wolf 2017). (Google Giacometti and this is also a top hit)

⁵⁶ Phillip Guston said that John Cage said, "When you start working, everybody is in your studio, the past, your friends, enemies, the art world, and above all, your own ideas- all are there. But as you continue painting, they start leaving, one by one, and you are left completely alone. Then, if you are lucky, even you leave." (Jones 1998, 11).

⁵⁷ I was able to articulate the importance of technique to my practice through performing GTDA in the *Slide Project*.

Drawing a parallel between mastering language as a tool to write, embracing the history of the figure as a subject of study, and as an art object, as well as ceramic technique, has given my solitary practice centuries of skills and solutions to call on, limitations to press against, and a medium to express with. When Danto recounts that new definitions for art appeared because, ‘artists pressed against boundary after boundary, and found that the boundaries all gave way’ (Danto, 2014, p.14), I recognize that the techniques I have chosen have historic limits, and that I only need to consider those boundaries differently in order to step over what was once taboo and use that former limit to subtle advantage. Using the figure or statues models employing a boundary that has given way. Statues are—to paraphrase Grayson Perry—one of the last truly dangerous thing[s].

Materials

There are difficulties with breaking away from the techniques and constraints of a craft or a subject as exhibited by the insecurity Giacometti invokes. There will be a new vocabulary that artist and viewer alike have not fully assimilated, or traditional inferences and connotations will overshadow the new method of engaging material or subject.

Grayson Perry, in his third Reith Lecture, points out that ‘contemporary art, is almost synonymous with the idea of novelty’ (2013, p.2). He contends that contemporary art or art today is usually described as ‘cutting edge,’ and the

artists are said to be 'radical;' the shows are described as game changers, and the work is spoken about as 'revolutionary, [while] a new paradigm is always being set' (p.2).

In contrast Perry speaks about two similar drawings found on a cave wall in France. When the two drawings were carbon dated, it was discovered that they were separated by five thousand years. Perry quotes the archaeologist as saying; "You know these look like they could have been done by the same person on the same day" (p.2). I suggest that my work occupies a small portion of the space between a new paradigm and five thousand similar years. There has been very little alteration in the material or in the subject I have chosen, but often the histories of both material and form overshadow the minute shifts with which each might be addressed.

Materiality addresses the medium through which the sculptor produces the art object. The statue is a negotiation of material and form through to a third object of, in my work for example, clay and figure as unified art object. The figure is, again in my work, rarely fully representational. It is recognizable, and my goal as artist is to use an understanding of anatomy as a tool and not as a template.

Bernini's *Pluto and Proserpina*, or *The Rape Of Proserpina*, 1622 (Figure 28), exhibits representational anatomy and the illusion of soft flesh, but it is not real

anatomy or flesh. In this same way, Pluto and Proserpina are represented and not real. Bernini, as Waldermar Januszczak says of Giotto in *The Renaissance Unchained*, 'has found a way to imagine the unimaginable. In the real world, it can't happen but in art, it can' (2015, @10:47-11:27).

Pluto and Proserpina are not real in the real world, but there they are as sculpture, the lord of the Underworld grasping the soft thigh of the daughter of the earth goddess Ceres. The material, or in this case the stone, is the medium through which the figure is expressed. Getsy posits that 'the sculptor must negotiate to some degree the integration of or interference between figuration and materiality when creating a representational sculpture' (Getsy, 2015, p.10). He goes on to suggest that the viewer must also 'see the statue as a combination of matter and figure' (p.10). The negotiation of statues includes an important merging of material and figure, to understand both, simultaneously. The encounter with statues holds the dual nature of material and figure but contained in a unified object.

Sculptor Henry Moore has often been quoted about truth to materials. The Oxford University Press Reference Web site provides the typical Moore quote: 'Each material has its own individual qualities . . . Stone, for example, is hard and concentrated and should not be falsified to look like soft flesh . . . It should keep its hard tense stoniness.' (Oxford, 2017) This implies that Moore believed

stone should always look like stone and never appear to be flesh. The OUP Reference goes on to suggest Moore eventually rescinded his hard-line stance.

Moore later admitted that the idea of truth to materials had become a fetish and in 1951 he conceded that it should not be made into a criterion of value, 'otherwise a snowman made by a child would have to be praised at the expense of a Rodin or a Bernini' (Oxford, 2017).

Reading the first quote in full from *Unit One*, I interpret Moore as suggesting something slightly different about truth to materials and doing that very much in the language of a sculptor. The full quote reads as follows:

Each sculptor through his past experience, through observation of natural laws, through criticism of his own work and other sculpture, through his character and psychological makeup, and according to his stage of development, finds that certain qualities in sculpture become of fundamental importance to him. For me these qualities are:

Truth to material: Every material has its own individual qualities. It is only when the sculptor works direct, when there is an active relationship with his material that the material can take its part in the shaping of an idea. Stone, for example, is hard and concentrated and should not be falsified to look like soft flesh – it should not be forced beyond its constructive build to a point of weakness. It should keep its hard tense stoniness. (Moore, 1934, p.29)

Two points stand out here: The first is that Moore is speaking about the sculptor's experience and that this is what he has found to be of primary importance to himself, as an artist. That important thing is this: an active, engaged relationship with the material, so 'that the material can take its part in

the shaping of an idea' (p.29), which, I contend has more to do with Moore's relationship to stone than stone and the softness of flesh. His work, I suggest, was altered by his studio experiences with stone. Moore was not tasked with, for example, a portrait of Louis XIV as Bernini was, he was making something that more resembled his feelings about the figure, or how figures feel, or how a reclining woman made of stone feels to him, rather than indicating a particular figure.

Clarifying what Moore finally considered truth to materials to evoke, reveals more of an issue of craft and training, than material. In a typewritten set of notes that Moore gave to editor Myfanwy Piper in 1970, now in the archives of the Tate, is a section called *Extracts From Various Notes Written In 1951* (Moore, 2015). It is from the writing here that Moore has been characterized as changing his mind about truth to materials. When Moore began to make work that broke away from the constraints of craft and tradition, it was essential to create a framing for the new kind of work he was embarking on. Thirty years later he recounts, 'many of us tended to make a fetish of [truth to materials]' (Moore, 2015, p.4). As his style of working became more broadly accepted and understood, Moore clarifies his position writing that 'rigid adherence to the doctrine results in domination of the sculptor by the material. The sculptor ought to be the master of his material. Only, not a cruel master' (Moore, 2015). From this understanding of Moore's truth to materials, I return to technique and the boundaries that were falling beneath artists like Moore, (as per Arthur Danto). There is the suggestion here that Moore came to see technique as the

etiquette with which a sculptor approaches material and develops familiarity, and not an imposed veil or limit, but that it is in having this expanded *vision* be something *visible to others* (as per Giacometti) that presents the constraining issue.

The primary and vital material of my work is Clay. I studied ceramics, and earned a certificate in the context of a craft school, and have therefore been schooled not only in the skills, but also in the language and traditions of ceramics and pottery which come as an integral part of that kind of education. I function peripherally in the context of ceramic tradition, although my skills with clay came through this tradition. Acquisition of those traditions along with the skills is often so well integrated that we are markedly unaware we inhabit them.

For example, in a 2014 Art News article declaring that, 'American ceramic art has finally come out of the closet, kicking and disentangling itself from domestic servitude and minor-arts status—perhaps for good' (Wei, 2014),⁵⁸ Artist Arlene Shechet, is quoted saying: 'I'm not a ceramic artist, [...]. I'm an artist who works in clay' (Shechet cited in Wei, 2014). Her work however specifically references clay practices and forms, and these conventions are seldom obvious to viewers

⁵⁸ The assimilation of ceramics into the fine art world has been heralded for decades. In the Journal, *American Ceramics*, Vol. 13, Number 2, 1999, former Sculpture Magazine editor Suzanne Ramljak interviews the New York Art dealer Garth Clark. Ramljak quotes Clark as saying, in an earlier issue, "I believe the 1980s will witness that true integration of ceramics into the fabric of American fine art we have so long anticipated." Speaking in 1999, Clark observed that to his surprise very few ceramic artists 'would make the cut once the standards of fine arts were applied.' He went on to say, some twenty years ago, that 'few individuals in our field had the strength to gain such acceptance.'

not familiar with ceramic tradition. Her work speaks to vessels and to ceramic tradition however dysfunctional her objects would be in a domestic setting. In the same article, artist Nicole Cherubini states that, 'As far as clay being a craft material, it blows me away that it is even part of the conversation anymore' (Cherubini cited in Wei, 2014). Cherubini's work also references vessels, pots, and shards. Artists working in other mediums are rarely as consistently drawn to the subtleties of functional vessel forms. These forms may be vestigial, but they do speak loudly about a particular tradition and not specifically what is potential or possible through the material.

My work and practice also has much of the traditions of clay still clinging to both. Again, my studio is essentially a pottery, although without the tidiness craft requires. My construction process is descended from large vessel hand building, but these references are hidden in the work, unless specifically displayed.⁵⁹ I am informed by, aware of, and have greatly benefitted from ceramic tradition. I have learned how to conduct productive and satisfactory relations with a material in a structured and tradition-based context. The clay informs me as much as the clay is informed by me. I make use of clay in service to the figure and ignore ceramics, as a discipline and tradition to that end.⁶⁰ But I do not specifically ask the clay to pretend that it is skin or hair or fingernails. The figures I make are not real people, they are not specific portraits or meant

⁵⁹ In the background of one of the video conversations collected for this project, I bring a man over to one of my pieces and lift the head and shoulders off the figure. I was explaining to him how the work is like a pot. (See video 3).

⁶⁰ By ignore I mean if I need to alter a form after it has been fired, I will grind it or add plaster to a piece and paint over it. My figures reference pots only to those who are versed in large scale ceramic construction, and are not like pots unless specifically designed to be like a pot.

to fool or trick the eye. They are ideas about people made using the statue as a vehicle.

Louise Bourgeois speaking about materials said in an interview that:

I transfer the energy into sculpture. This applies to everything I do. It has nothing to do with the craft. It has nothing to do with the skills. It has nothing to do with the how to manage materials. Materials are materials, nothing more. Materials are not the subject of the artist. The subject of the artist is emotions and ideas – both. (Louise Bourgeois: The Spider, The Mistress And The Tangerine , 2008, @1:31:04).

That materials are not the subject of the artist is—for me—a given, but what allows me to expand and explore in the studio is how the materials I use function as tools to think with and to materialize emotions and ideas.

Statues in the Studio

I have argued that using clay in service to the figure, or statues, calls attention to the clay, the material, although subtly. I make my figures or statues like large vessels or pots, through this—combined with my knowledge of anatomy—I am certain my work is not a copy of life. I know that my figures are hollow and do not contain any of the muscles or viscera or bones that living bodies do, and that are necessary to that life. We see through the skin of a person (or animal) to a veiled hint of the viscera contained inside the body. The surface I show with clay is little more than that veil or shroud of what is contained underneath,

although there is (usually)⁶¹ only a hollow pot inside. What I make is a form, not a person, it is like a pot, it is an object shaped like a person. It is the suggestion of anatomy and the history of statues as an art form that combine in my encounter with my work and with statues.

Encounter

There are barriers to perceiving the encounter with a statue as something fresh and fertile. Art historian James Hall conveys that a significant difficulty with statues was the way in which the freestanding *idol* encouraged dissenting thought. Statues, he writes, were considered ‘more resistant to being incorporated into a master narrative, and they thus encourage the viewer to plug the semantic gap with their own, potentially heretical interpretation’ (Hall, 1999, p.117). Well into the eighteenth century, sculpture—which meant statues at this time —was considered a brutish and dangerously mute discipline, resulting in a potentially treacherous and expressionless blank canvas that could lend support to unsanctioned concepts. The dominant discourse in the academy of the nineteenth century had mostly been pursued as an image of what was, a copy of nature, or an image we could all read and comprehend collectively and as sanctioned, so therefore safely. The more work portrayed what was sanctioned as real, the less chance for misinterpretation. Therefore artistic training generally sought to obtain skill in reproducing a person, or a landscape or a particular religious story or event.

⁶¹ To be absolutely clear, the insides of my pieces are not exactly pot-like in that the interiors are not aesthetically considered. It is not a pristine environment, but rather the hollow from which I can push and press and form the exterior.

Spanish Philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset wrote with annoyance in his essay, *The Dehumanization of Art*, that artists in the nineteenth century went too far, 'and let the work consist almost entirely in a fiction of human realities' (Ortega y Gasset, 1972, p.11). He writes that 'an object of art is artistic only insofar as it is not real' (p.10). This is an important point about art objects and a particularly significant point about statues, as discussed in chapter one. However, Ortega y Gasset laments that 'not many people are capable of adjusting their perceptive apparatus to . . . the transparency that is the work of art' (p.11), that we are not generally refined enough to see through the portrait, beyond the person portrayed, to the art. The solution for Ortega y Gasset is modern art or 'pure art' (p.12).

Pure art for Ortega y Gasset, writes journalist Anthony Howell, involves 'a progressive elimination of the human or too human elements characteristic of romantic and naturalistic works of art' (Howell, 2015, p.5) until the human is removed from art altogether. 'We then have an art which can be comprehended only by people possessed of the peculiar gift of artistic sensibility, an art for artists and not for the masses, for "quality" and not for hoi polloi' (p.12). If we remove our image we will see the art.

However, in direct contrast to those minimalist and modern sensibilities—where the art object is defined by that removal of all representation—a statue is the consequence of combining material and image into a shimmery third

thing that never quite settles down into just material or subject for us. To expose how the human form—both wielded as an artist and encountered and considered as an art object—retains and enlarges the materiality, physicality, form, and concept in one unified object is the key theoretical moment for statues. It is this revealing, and conceptually locating of statues as an example or the embodiment of the flickering of material, form, and our own assumptions (in and of our own image) that is presented to us through an encounter with statues as art objects. Rather than remove the image, a subtle shift in our discussion of the image and comparisons to the real or the mimetic could be altered. To understand that statues in particular are real and not real simultaneously, and to hold this duality as an acknowledged approach to statues may allow the image to support the ‘transparency that is the work of art’ (p.11) and therefore potentially better indicate the altered perspective that art provides. Acknowledging both the material and the (human) form—the real and the not real—in the encounter is an initial point for measuring a reconsideration or modification of our perception of statues.

To further indicate the importance and conceptual complexity of the human form in sculpture, David Getsy argues (Getsy, 2015) that the rejection and removal of the figure in 1960s sculpture, in favour of non-referencing abstraction, inadvertently generated narratives about the ‘multiplicity and mutability’ (Getsy, 2015, p.xvi) of gender. He argues that efforts to expunge the human form specifically and representation generally, was expressed using descriptions of the human body and even gender. ‘Abstraction calls forth the

image of the human but refuses to give an anchoring image of it' (2016, @4:21).

The body is referred to but not 'imaged.' Getsy supposes a more fluid

understanding of body, of gender, of personhood has ensued.

Repeating in the way a mirror does, but doing more than just reflecting,

sculpture reveals, illuminates, or evokes things we cannot see about ourselves.

Sculpture perhaps manifests perception in a way comparable to Donald Schön's

observation that 'we have the ability also, to reflect *on* our reflection-*in*-

action'⁶² (Schön, 1995, p.6) A method of reflecting *on* our reflection-*in*-action is

able to show more to the practitioner than the practitioner could see in the

moment during practice, or even in only reflecting on practice after the fact.

Getsy's submission indicates that the history of sculpture influences and

informs the encounter or how we look at and discuss sculpture, even when no

human form is present in the work. The encounter is perhaps, influenced by

more than what we assume and can see in the moment and this may mark the

quality of similarities, variations and the potential in our encounters with

statues.

Words and the Encounter

Professor of modern languages and comparative literature, Naomi Segal writes

about words and statues. She points to the form of the veiled statue, as

⁶² Schön is suggesting that watching a video of ourselves in action has a slight difference to remembering what it was like to reflect in action. (Schön, *Reflective Practice: its implications for classroom, administration and research*, 1995)

specifically represented by Antonio Corradini and Giuseppe Sanmartino,⁶³ *Veiled Truth* (1752) and *Veiled Christ* (1753) respectively (Figures 29 and 30). She speaks about the carving of diaphanous cloth veiling the flesh, and how that carving of cloth is ‘a second layer’ (Segal, 2006, p.1) over the figure, revealing as much as it conceals.⁶⁴ Segal suggests that words are ‘a third skin, of a similarly revelatory and frustrating kind.

Her thesis is that words play ‘with the border between life and fixity, bodies and stone’ (Segal, 2006, p.15). She quotes a poem⁶⁵ about Michelangelo’s statues particularly of the (so called) *Slaves* (various dates beginning in 1505), *Moses* (1515), and the *Pieta* (1499) (Figure 31). The poem points out that the suffering of the slaves is silent, that Moses pulls on his beard in agitation but sits still, and that although her suffering is apparent, no tears fall from Mary’s eyes. Segal’s translation of Meyer’s poem ends with: ‘What tortures the living breast is rendered blissful and delightful in stone. You make the moment eternal – and you die, ever and again, but with no death’ (Meyer, Trans. Segal) (Segal, 2006, p.10). ‘Words precisely permit what stone does not’ (p.10).

Suffering cannot be overcome in life. It has been captured and held in the stone and laid out for us to examine and to understand that we are not alone in our

⁶³ Corradini’s *Veiled Truth* or *Modesty* stands in the Santa Maria della Pietà dei Sangro in Naples and Sanmartino’s *Veiled Christ* in the Museo Capella Sansevero, also in Naples.

⁶⁴ It is important to understand here that suggesting that the veil and the flesh are layers is slightly nonsensical. Veiled statues are an illusion. That we are so transfixed by this illusion points to the difficulty we have, as per Ortega y Gasset, with seeing through the “veil” to the material. There is no veil over the stone figure, except in what we assume.

⁶⁵ The poem is in German and by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer (1825-1898).

endurance of it.⁶⁶ She writes, analysing the poem that ‘it is the very paradoxical capacity of stone⁶⁷ to catch the moment before a visible event, an emotional consequence, that fascinates [Meyer]’ (p.10). Therefore, it is the narrative that we supply or is supplied for us that enables the emotions that allows the statue to suggest suffering back to us, that allows us to see and feel what suffering, agitation, and loss might be, and to prepare for it, and if not to understand it, then to at least recognize and witness it.

Again, the art is in our encounter with the object, and is influenced by what we bring to that encounter. The stone and the image, and the concretized ideas that words and stories are able to signify historically and culturally, appear to inform what we experience, and what we require from the experience of statues.

Artist Joseph Kosuth’s piece, *One and Three Chairs*, (1965) (Figure 32) further demonstrates the influences of words on the encounter. A brief description of *One and Three Chairs*: a chair—any simple chair will do—is placed in the space that will be exhibiting the piece, and photographed. The picture of the chair in place is then displayed on the wall to the left of the chair and on the right side is a dictionary definition of chair. The MoMA Website reports that, ‘In *One and*

⁶⁶ Ortega y Gasset disagrees with this “capturing” being something useful in art. Ortega y Gasset writes that the only requirement to engage with this kind of work ‘is human sensibility and willingness to sympathize with our neighbor’s joys and worries’ (Ortega y Gasset, 1972, pp.11). He would have art be dehumanized and more dependant on ‘our power to focus on transparencies and images’ (pp.11).

⁶⁷ I am compelled to point out that this capacity is not limited or unique to stone.

Three Chairs, Joseph Kosuth represents one chair three ways' (MoMA, 2017). The chairs are considered and witnessed, but each "chair" is very different. Much of what is true about Michelangelo's statues is true about Kosuth's piece. Again, words permit what stone—or in this case the object: chair—does not, to paraphrase Segal.

Standing in front of Kosuth's piece, in an exhibition setting, the real chair is off limits as a chair, or functional object, and in this case we may be willing to concede that this piece is indeed three chairs. Sitting down to dinner, we would not consider either the picture of the chair or the definition of the chair useful. They are merely images of chairs. What is suggested back to us by this piece is not only how conceptual our grasp of the world can be, but also that at times we have the capacity to give an almost equal weight to the intangible—the photo and the definition—as we do to the object. This is often overlooked as we consider how the picture is a single view of the chair, and reveals much less about the chair than the chair itself. The brief dictionary description, in English, also does not exhaust the chair, and is only available to those able to read English. Both perhaps corroborate that kind of subtle iconoclasm where the object (the chair) is reduced to what it might be only as an object in a gallery (not in a dining room), and therefore without including the chair's other, less conceptual life as an object.

The encounter with a photograph of a chair or of an image of a person differs from the encounter with the object (or person) in that the object is removed from direct experience. However, a statue is a real object. In some ways this is what always happens to sculpture in a gallery, it is encountered in the same way and with the same rules as an image. We may never touch or make use of a statue as we might a chair but it remains that a picture of a chair, or of a statue differs from the object, the description of the statue (or chair) is not equivalent to the object. When we allow the words to become the equivalent of a statue, we believe that the stone figure really is covered in a veil, or that the nudity of a statue is an equivalent for our nudity, and therefore taboo, and while this is the illusion that the artist may have wished to create, we are missing much more that the object in the world has to offer.

In this context, we can see the separation of object and our idea about or our encounter with the object. The flesh and the shroud are not really separate layers, and the stone (or clay) is not a naked sinner. The words as concretized ideas appear to inform what we experience, and somehow override and veil the object from us, and in short, veil the thing itself, concealing what we could extract from the experience.

Arthur Danto quotes Hegel, writing 'art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing

philosophically what art is (2014, p.13/14). Recognizing that the philosophical invitation is there when we encounter statues is an approach to experiencing them with altered expectations. As Danto is quoted in the introduction, when, 'artists pressed against boundary after boundary, and found that the boundaries all gave way' (p.14) and the result was the Duchamp-ian cry that really anything can be art, the status of statues as art objects began to decline. The object itself began to recede through a kind of popular conceptual iconoclasm that held statues to be merely lesser copies of us. Statues as art objects, I argue retain inherent albeit veiled philosophical concerns that directly correspond to us and then move beyond us. Statues offer us reflection on a knowing about the body, as well as materials required to make them, through to the disdain of our conflicted assessment that they are lesser copies of us.

Apprehending some of the character of the construction of these assessments or narratives or concepts, Philosopher Shaun Gallagher begins his paper *Self and Narrative* (2015) this way: 'Narratives don't exist in thin air. They are physical things' (2015, p.403). He goes on to argue that narratives exist in the world, dependent on other people who understand the narrative, which is made of language and semantics, which is mostly created by people probably not known by the original narrator. While Gallagher is moving toward making a point about inter-subjectivity, I use his argument, but suggest it means that we can be compelled by concepts whose origins and construction we are

unacquainted with, and ideas and thinking we are unaware we have allegiance to.⁶⁸

Feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, further examining Deleuze and Guattari, also speaks about concepts. She takes a position cited in their book, *What Is Philosophy?* (1994), that while philosophy generates concepts as its way of addressing provocations and issues, art does not. Instead, art generates 'sensations, affects, and intensities' (Grosz, 2012, p.1). Art does have concepts, but those concepts are 'by-products or effects and not the material of art' (p.4). Grosz proposes that philosophy 'may find itself the twin or sibling of art' (p.2), and could, rather than assessing or illuminating or speaking for art, be used to 'addresses the common forces and the regions of overlap between' (p.2) art and philosophy. She suggests here a way to use art to do philosophy, to use philosophy to bring forward the by-products and effects of art into concepts. Drawing out her argument suggests that a statue itself has no specific concept or meaning that can be considered a fact or knowledge, only 'sensations, affects, and intensities' contained in the material, subject and presentation. Concepts appear to assist in our encounter with statues providing the means to glean a concept from the 'impact' the statue has on us.

⁶⁸ Correspondingly, in Brian Massumi's translation of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, (1987) comes a short sentence in Massumi's introduction: 'A concept is a brick,' followed by 'It can be used to build a courthouse of reason. Or it can be thrown through the window' (Deleuze, 1987, p.xii). This evokes an image of the physical consequence of the concreteness of ideas, the importance of how they are used, whether destructively or constructively, and contains an intimation of the labour that might be involved with inspecting their construction.

Statues are something other than a lesser form of ourselves. This is made explicit in practice where constructing a figure is unlike dissecting a cadaver or washing a badly scraped knee. As an example, as I began to have children I became interested in Madonna figures. I was investigating the mother and child together. The child form I most used in this series was a ball with a face and limbs (Images 27-30). There is little in this form to suggest life or a person. However, the concepts we encounter statues with make it coherent. The child was easily identified, although not an actual child shape. While the form did suggest what the feeling of a little child might be, it was augmented by cues, such as the way the larger figure held the ball, which is also present in other statues of a mother and child. It is this recognition of the nature of the object as something other than an illustration of a fact or knowledge that brings into focus the purpose of investigating and understanding our own encounter beyond the object itself.

Methods and Diffraction

Are we ventriloquizing the object, making it speak to us or for us, or is the object ventriloquizing us? Are we animating the dead material, lending voice to the voiceless, or is the object animating us, by constantly prompting us to talk about it and on its behalf. (Comay, 2015, p.44)

The methods of this study rose from practice. An illustration of the construction of the methodology would be this: My practice is like a small pond. It has a

prescribed size and depth and statues are like a small stone that I toss into the pond repeatedly. I have tossed many stones into the pond and interpreted the circles and ripples for decades. This study represents another stone. This stone is to be dropped into the pond with the stone that represents statues making a diffraction pattern from which to collect additional data about the boundaries of the pond, the water, and the stones.

Grosz claims that it is boundaries, or a frame, that 'establishes territory out of the chaos that is the earth' (Grosz, 2012, p.11). She writes, interpreting Philosopher Gilles Deleuze, and Psychoanalyst Philosopher Felix Guattari, that it is the frame that allows 'qualities' to become 'expressive' and to 'transform,' to become art. The framing, that allows qualities or attributes to alter, can be applied to both the frame of practice and the frame of the art object (or performance or installation, etc.) Framing through practice allows a site and an approach for the alteration of material to take place, while art frames qualities from which the work is made. A further framing of myself, as artist, inside the parameters of my studio and practice, allows qualities I may not perfectly realize, to be expressed and become a transformative force. That there are parameters laid out as studio and as the work that takes place there, should make disinterested reflection available—what I am to look at and consider is defined—but I am also part of the practice that takes place there and this is what challenges that position.

In her book *Meeting The Universe Halfway* (2007), theorist Karen Barad proposes diffraction as an overall methodology. For this study, diffraction, although similarly defined, has been used as a method, specifically for collection, consideration, and analysis of data. Much of what Barad proposes concerns reading ‘insights from . . . different areas of study through one another’ (Barad, 2007, p.25). This method comes from Barad’s understanding of Haraway, who considers diffraction, as opposed to reflection⁶⁹, as a way to activate a reconfiguring of our social/political and conceptual engagement with the world. She writes (and Barad also quotes) of reflection and diffraction that, ‘the first invites the illusion of essential, fixed position, while the second trains us to more subtle vision’ (Haraway, 1992, p.300). Haraway’s subtle vision has proved to be a method to recognize something overlooked or new in tacit studio knowledge. In short, being attentive to where the ‘effects of difference appear,’ has been both a device for structuring methods and a mechanism to redirect my interest to habitually discounted attributes or incidents that, viewed through this concept, proved to be significant.

Barad further speaks about diffraction in an interview with Writer Iris van der Tuin. Diffraction, she implies, while kin to reflection, draws in related concepts rather than, like a mirror, merely displacing or repeating ‘the same elsewhere’ (Barad as cited by van der Tuin, (2012), p.51). Vital to the subtle difference a diffracted form of reflection made to data collection in this project, has been

⁶⁹ Here reflection is used in the optical sense of the word.

Haraway's assertion that 'A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of difference appear' (Haraway, 1992, p.302).⁷⁰

Reflection-In-Action:

Barad also uses the term *unknowability* in her book, *Meeting The Universe Halfway*, (2007). She compares unknowability in physics of physical states with the unknowability of knowing ourselves, without the reflection of ourselves back from others. She writes, 'we are prohibited, in principle, from knowing our own thoughts, motives, and intentions. The only possibility we have of catching a glimpse of ourselves is through the eyes of another' (Barad, 2007, p.11). She highlights this point by making use of the play *Copenhagen*, by Michael Frayn about the physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg at the end of WWII. Heisenberg was once Bohr's student and an intimate of the Bohr's household. Upon meeting again after several years, Bohr, Bohr's wife Margrethe, and Heisenberg are in a room making small talk. The conversation is shallow, overly polite, and very awkward. The following are the internal dialogs of Heisenberg and Bohr:

⁷⁰ As a further illustration, a diffraction pattern is formed in water when two stones are plopped into a still pond. When the waves created by each stone meet *in phase*, the waves build each other up, and conversely the waves that are *out of phase* cancel each other out (Veritasium, 2013). Here, making use of Levi-Strauss' bricolage method, the *other stones* were chosen from suggested and intuited subjects at hand. The *statue stone* was dropped (into the pond of practice) with a new theory or *subject stone* to discover what characteristics would meet in phase. The ideas and aspects that met in phase were enhanced, and encouraged each other, while those that met out of phase were cancelled out.

Heisenberg: And yet how much more difficult still it is to catch the slightest glimpse of what's behind one's eyes. Here I am at the centre of the universe, and yet all I can see are two smiles that don't belong to me....

Bohr: I glance at Margrethe, and for a moment I see what she can see and I can't— myself, and the smile vanishing from my face as poor Heisenberg blunders on.

Heisenberg: I look at the two of them looking at me, and for a moment I see the third person in the room as clearly as I see them.

Bohr: I look at him looking at me, anxiously, pleadingly, urging me back to the old days, and I see what he sees. And yes— now it comes, now it comes— there's someone missing from the room. He sees me. He sees Margrethe. He doesn't see himself. (Frayn, 1998, pp.87, Act 2) (Barad, 2007, p.12)

The two men, one in frustration and one with acceptance, find self-evaluation to be impossible without an outside perspective. Heisenberg struggles with being the centre of his experience, and yet has no access to the thoughts or perspective of either Bohr or Margarethe and barely understands the effect he has on them. He can only briefly glimpse himself in their veiled responses. Bohr, knowing and having accepted this difficulty with self-perception, makes use of Margarethe for perspective and soon understands Heisenberg's predicament, and he further knows Heisenberg is unaware of himself in context. In the studio, where I am specifically in the centre of practice and of this study, and in the investigation of the encounter with statues, it is this understanding that I have worked to acknowledge and respond to.

The methods and practices that form the research of this study are outlined specifically in chapter three, however reflection has proven to be a significant

matter both as a condition of the studio to address through methods, and as a concern throughout negotiating the encounter. For example, a method for moving past self was to video myself working in the studio and to analyse the video of myself, rather than try to understand my actions while in the studio, or to record conversations with others about statues making it possible to analyse what was said with a method that could account for perspective, rather than in the moment. Frayn indicates our blindness to the difficulty with self-reflection or 'seeing' ourselves or hearing ourselves in the world, and underscores the necessity of a signal back from the world to achieve most self-knowledge. This suggests we cannot even exhaust knowledge of ourselves. Further the capacity to reflect on what we say about our encounter with statues requires that we see or hear ourselves speaking about statues. Like Heisenberg, we cannot see ourselves—or hear ourselves—from inside the conversation.

A method for reflecting on our actions is the concept of reflective practice put forward by Schön, who suggests in *Reflective Practice: its implications for classroom, administration and research* (1995), the example of a ball player watching a video of the game the day after as a useful approach to a perspective on our own actions. My initial attempts at reflection in the studio were simply to write what I was thinking while I was working, which quickly became an additional and distracting duty while working. The early reflective experiments proved to be confusing and eventually indicated problems with this form of direct reflecting for me in my practice. Early in this study, I engaged affect as a theory to consider what happens when we encounter statues. I recorded myself

reading the book, *The Transmission Of Affect*, by Philosopher and Theorist Teresa Brennan. I played this reading in the studio as I began the reworking of the hips and thigh of a figure. In order to be reflective, I wrote down my thoughts in a notebook as they occurred to me.

Initially, I did not recognize that I had only written what I was thinking about in the studio, and had not written about my actions in the studio, until a few weeks later, when I went back to consider the pictures and the text together. I discovered I had only written about affect and the concepts in the book I was listening to. I had not written anything about how I had approached and reworked the hips and thighs of the figure, which I altered and reworked for about three hours.

This set of circumstances was similarly repeated and documented in the same way three more times. Even when I was aware that there had been a disconnection between doing and thinking, I was still moved to write about what I was *thinking* about not what I was actually doing. I found writing about what I was doing to be intensely disruptive. I returned again to Donald Schön, who points out that reflecting on actions generally stops *flow*. This was certainly my experience. Schön quotes Hannah Arendt as saying, 'All thinking demands a Stop and Think . . .' (p.278), and mentions the well-known story of the 'centipede paralyzed by the attempt to explain how he moves' (277). It is important to note that Schön makes a clear distinction between reflection-*on*-action, reflection-*in*-action and reflection *on* reflection-*in*-action. He explains

that while reflection ‘takes place in the medium of words’ (Schön, 1995, p.3), *reflection-in-action* is more like a form of improvisation in music, where the unexpected comes from the context of the familiar, where tacit knowing is allowed to respond and disrupt routine, as responding in conversation does, or recognizing someone’s face, but it is something still difficult to describe in words. Reflecting on reflection-*in-action* differs from reflecting-*on-action*, in that it is a direct consideration of documentation of what happened during reflection-*in-action*, such as a video or recording, and not merely considering or analysing a situation after the event.

Schön points out we all practice this kind of extemporization described as reflection-*in-action*. But again, the ballplayer would be hampered by explaining her actions during the game, however watching a video of the game the day after, the athlete is afforded the ability to *see* and understand ‘how [she] let that guard get around her each time.’ She knows she will have to be faster. ‘This she does in words – reflection on reflection-in-action takes place in words’ (Schön, 1995, p.5). The ballplayer now knows what happened and what to do next to achieve the results she desires. Here, words meet the tacit knowledge of practice without disrupting flow. Schön further argues that reflection-in-action ‘not only applies knowledge, but generates knowledge’ (Schön, 1995, p.5), therefore the perspective of the video offers the possibility of articulating and gaining knowledge from practice. With this understanding, the difficulties I had with direct reflection on practice evaporated, and several methods for discerning studio events—and other data—became obvious.

This study has focused on both statues and our encounter with them. My practice making statues in my studio positioned as encounter provided a perspective on the encounter with statues and served as a necessary platform from which to understand and analyse and to further comprehend how our encounters are formed and function. The materials I use are not the subject of my work but they are the tools I use to think with, to realize through, and so ultimately they are the means through which I transmit *emotions and ideas*. Therefore, through making work in the studio I am made aware of the non-human nature of statues through materials in a particularly concrete way. Furthermore, through attempts to document these encounters in the studio, I became aware of the limitations of my perspective. In making use of the altered perspective offered by video allowed the possibility of understanding, articulating, and thus gaining knowledge from practice.

CHAPTER THREE

Projects and Duality

This chapter outlines a series of practical projects performed as research for this investigation alongside the main body of creative practice. The projects were designed to be explorations or features of the encounter with statues or, in the case of *The Conversation Project*, analysis of conversations with other people about their encounters with statues. The projects are identified as such to allow each to frame gains made through practice at certain stages of this study. Each project discloses the particular significance of applying an altered intention, derived from considering actions in practice diffractively with concepts from outside my practice.

However, a preliminary examination of the various projects and encounters with statues finds a duality apparent in many. This duality has been engaged in discussions of the *real/not real* of a statue as a real object, but not a real person, or the statue is spoken about as if it were a real person although it is not, or when the statue embodies (or becomes the locus but is not actually the locus) of ideas or concepts resulting in the specific iconoclasm of destruction of images. In order to address the possible origins (and nature) of duality as it appears in relation to the encounter with statues in several of the projects (particularly the *Conversation Project* and the *Giacometti Materials Project*), duality is briefly explored, chiefly through a discussion of what metaphor (and

to some extent mirror neurons) might account for in our encounter with statues.

Duality

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote in his 1936 article, *The Crack Up* that ‘the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function’ (Fitzgerald, 1936, p.2). While this appears to be a welcome mark of intellect, Fitzgerald ultimately determines this duality to be a source of something undesirable, as this study also finally indicates. The location and nature of the parallel thinking or duality uncovered in this study appears to be an unresolved way to speak about the *real* of the object—although it is the *not real* of the form—in terms of human traits. This can be clarified somewhat by what Philosopher Richard Wollheim calls ‘seeing-in’ in *Art and its Objects* (1980). Seeing-in is a ‘matter of seeing Y in X’ (p.140)⁷¹, where X = the medium or representation and Y = the object, or what is represented. It is the difference between encountering a statue as a person and encountering the form of a person, and being aware of the impulse to bestow human properties and intention on it.

What is real and what is not real is difficult to point to in these objects, it is indistinct and fluid. For instance, that the material is real but the form is not, is true but also not true, because the form is also real, but not a person. The double nature appears as parallel lines of meaning, held apart but in tandem,

⁷¹ As opposed to ‘seeing-as’ which is seeing X as Y.

often evident when we speak about statues, when 'off guard' or, conversely, when we are most certain about our encounter. This characteristic of a double nature in the encounter with statues is explored further in the remaining projects discussed in this chapter.

The approach taken here has not been to seek a location or definition, but rather an indication of the duality concealed in the way we speak about encountering statues. To this indication, I received an e-mail from my Director of Studies, the Sculptor Dr. Michael Bowdidge. He wrote about one of his small statue-figures placed near a window;

Looking at him 'looking out of the window' I was struck by the fact that at some level that seems very real, as if that's what he's actually doing but at another level I know he's not. (Bowdidge, 2017)⁷²

He continued, writing that because he was quite familiar with this figure, he understood that the *looking out of the window* he perceived his figure to be doing, rose from himself, and was not something the statue was actually doing. He wrote, 'I wonder if we all retain, somewhere, some almost intuitive kind of scepticism about 'other minds' (Bowdidge, 2017). He went on to concede that solipsism is neither easy to refute nor of much use in getting along with other people. The suggestion is that because we are socialized not to continually

⁷² Bowdidge, M, m_bowdidge@hotmail.com, 2017. stuff. [E-mail] Message to L Osborn (lbosborn@aol.com). Sent Sat, Jun 10, 2017 6:34 am. [Accessed 10 June 2017].

question other consciousnesses, that perhaps this is what empowers objects shaped like people to appear to look out a window, because we are used to assuming the internal reality of the other. We see the statue's shape, he implied, and assume a consciousness until it once again becomes obvious that the statue isn't real. However, while solipsism and the perils therein certainly play some role in the encounter with statues, it cannot fully account for the encounter in the story of Pygmalion, or the contemporary touching of the effigy of Victor Noir, or embarrassment at the nudity of statues.

A doll can appear to be 'looking out the window' but we do not necessarily believe in its consciousness or think it is alive until we notice that it doesn't breathe or move. The underlying assumption of life is not exactly what allows us to speak about looking in relation to the doll while knowing the doll is not actually looking. The nature of our encounter with statues is revealed and shown to be subtle and complex when David Getsy writes about the passive resistance of statues (2004), or Jean-Paul Sartre writes in his 1948 article, *The Search For The Absolute*, (1996), that Giacometti's figures distil life and that 'for three thousand years sculpture has modelled only corpses' (1996, p.186), and when, in the 2014 catalogue for *The Human Factor Exhibition* at the Hayward Gallery, Ugo Rondinone is quoted as saying that his figures 'are exposed and vulnerable because they are nude' (p.160).

There is nothing to suggest that Getsy thinks statues are really acting out a resistance, or that Sartre supposed all statues were dead people until Giacometti made a living one, or Rondinone believes his statues are really naked and exposed people, but they have all written as though the statues are something other than a stone or wax or metal, without apology or self-consciousness.

Metaphor and Mirror Neurons

As discussed in chapter one, mirror neurons are the neurons that fire in the brain both during an action and when observing an action performed by another. The relevance to this study lies in the suggestion that the 'body state simulated by mirror neurons is not the subject's body state' (Damasio, 2010, p.110). This again brings the form of the statue into question, suggesting the possibility of mirror neurons working in relation to the encounter with statues, and therefore connected to the dual nature of our discourse about statues. Instead of solipsism, as my Director of Studies suggested, it is perhaps a more embodied state that allows us to recognize the realness of the object and to then confuse the not-realness of the person shape, combining both at once through an embodied encounter with statues. As Ramachandran suggests, the significance to this particular study—of what mirror neurons are supposed to do—is that they allow the barriers 'between you and other human beings' (2009, pp.6:00) to dissolve without actually touching.

A statue offers the experience of tactile, rather than purely conceptual, affinity.⁷³ Further drawing out the function of mirror neurons, in a 2005 study by Vittorio Gallese and George Lakoff called *The Brain's Concepts: The Role Of The Sensory-Motor System In Conceptual Knowledge* (2005), the role of mirror neurons (also Canonical, and Action-location neurons) or a group called 'executing schemas, (or X-schemas for short.)' (p.14) is addressed in conceiving of and/or executing new and previously unconsidered ideas. The tasks x-schema perform are described this way:

In short, they are capable of carrying out imaginative simulations. Furthermore, those imaginative simulations can carry out abstract conceptual reasoning as well as actions and perceptions. The result is a neural theory of conceptual metaphor. (Lakoff & Gallese, 2005, p.15)

This is a suggestion that metaphor is part of the mechanism of constructing new ideas and the comprehension of abstract ideas. What Gallese and Lakoff are proposing is that we build from what we *know*, for example, because we have experience with travel, we can then conceptualize a long term love relationship as a journey. Consequently, we are able to jump ahead in our

⁷³ Film maker Daria Martin has edited a recently published a book about mirror synaesthesia called *Mirror-Touch Synaesthesia; Thresholds of Empathy With Art* 2017, which brings together newly commissioned essays of the blurring particularly between sight and touch and empathic responses by neuroscientists, anthropologists, artists, and art theorists. Martin proposes 'the construction of a certain kind of mind—a synaesthetic mind—as a model for looking at art work and the converse can also be true—artworks might model the mind' (Martin, 2014, 4:11). Martin investigates how mirror-touch can model an empathic way of engaging with artworks. Statues are ideally situated to provide a model for this kind of empathic response. Furthermore, this project includes the assumption that all perception is embodied, and that we make use of more than one sense at a time.

knowing, extending and negotiating the similarities and differences⁷⁴. We can see, conceptualize, and grasp a previously un-encountered significance.

While the quote does seem to highlight certain assumptions in neuroscience, particularly where neurons are described as ‘capable of carrying out imaginative simulations’ (p.15),⁷⁵ perhaps this neural capacity speaks to the reason we see a veiled statue when it is merely one stone carved in a particular way, or consider a statue to be embarrassingly naked, or feel the grief of Mary holding Jesus. To me, this is particularly apparent in religious statues, where the person presented as a statue is already a conceptual metaphor. For example, Michelangelo’s *Pieta*: a still young and virginal Mary, holds the corpse of her grown son, on her lap; echoing the Madonna and child, which adds substantially to the pity and the sorrow. None of this is physically possible in our world, but it is for a statue and we revel in the realness and possibility proposed by the statue. It is the manifestation of several very abstract concepts. The statue is, although it is also not, almost evidence of a moment that was and

⁷⁴ Graham Harman further draws out the uses of metaphor in terms of an object’s allure, briefly discussed in Chapter 4.

⁷⁵ Damasio begins *Self Comes To Mind* (2010) saying that this book was ‘written to start over’ (Damasio, 2010, p.6). Damasio writes that, though he had been engaged in studying the human brain and mind for over 30 years, he had grown ‘dissatisfied with [his former] account of the problem’ (p.6) of consciousness. He says that after looking again, at research old and new, in slightly different ways, he has come to alter his former thinking, principally on two problems: ‘the origin and nature of feelings and the mechanisms behind the construction of the self’ (p.7). His book, he claims is about ‘what we still do not know but wish we did’ (p.7). What Damasio has achieved through re-conceiving his former ‘account of the problem’ (p.6) of consciousness, is identifying where the key problems lie in the underling framework. Alva Noë also makes this point: He writes in *Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature* that ‘neuroscience is straitjacketed, not by the methods of science, to be sure, but by unacknowledged philosophical assumptions, not so much by a theory as by an ideology about what we are’ (Noë, 2015, p.120). That you are your brain, he continues, ‘is not one of neuroscience’s findings; it is rather a raft of assumptions that have been taken for granted by neuroscience from the start; it is Descartes’s conception but given a materialist makeover’ (Noë, 2015, pp.120-21).

still is real, but is not real. Solid as a concept and here, made solid beyond words in the world.

To claim that mirror neurons are the means through which we can consider a veiled woman rather than a stone or we might be made uncomfortable by a naked statue is clearly beyond the scope of this study. I have merely grasped a possibility that speaks to my experience (in the form of encounters) with statues. The action of simulation of mirror neurons as described by Damasio speaks to experiences documented for this study, such as *being caught unaware* by statues, and my own experience of making figures and feeling that a form is human shaped or knowing how to alter that form to better make use of it. The action of mirror neurons suggests to me how the gesture of a statue might be able to cause empathy to rise in me, or how I can use gesture to indicate a mother and child when neither is shaped like a real mother or child.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ The ability of neurons to influence other cells is the foundation of the construction of brain maps, which are generated in the brain and are actual, physical, *cartographical* things, contends Damasio. This is accomplished somewhat like a digital billboard, where each piece does its part. The brain both receives information from the body about the body with which it has a close physiological bond, and through the body about the world, with which it *has no* physiological bond. Damasio says that, 'we generate brain maps of the body's interior and use them as the reference for all other maps' (pp.9:48). 'When the brain makes maps, it informs itself' (2010, p.67). When the brain makes maps, it creates images, achieved through the senses (the body), and stores the multi-sensory images. This infers that our memories are full-body experiences made of smell, temperature, feelings, emotions, etcetera. The brain has the ability to bring the images back into mind when needed (Damasio, 2010, p.67). The maps are made in specific parts of the brain, stored in different brain regions, but recall takes place in the areas in which the maps were constructed. Map images are the main currency of minds, created in the brain to serve, update, and inform the organism, typically unconsciously ⁷⁶, of appropriate actions of the body toward continuing or gaining 'biological value' (p.76) and a maintained existence, and to accumulate memory and, eventually, autobiography. Damasio submits that when the embodied organism encounters objects in the world, it is a full body experience.

Damasio contends that this is because 'the brain actually records the multiple consequences of the organism's interactions with the entity' (p.141), it is not just the object's

That we are a body in the world, embodied, and that what and how we think is absolutely locked into that embodied experience appears certain, yet it is difficult to internalize this structure and not imagine our minds as separate. Contrary to Cartesian duality, Damasio argues that our mind arises from our body; that the body is where consciousness comes from. This idea is not a new one, Baruch Spinoza in *Ethics*, published in 1677, also opposes Descartes' mind-body duality. Damasio writes in *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003) that when Spinoza wrote that 'the human mind is the idea of the human body' (Damasio, 2003, p.12) (Spinoza, 1955, p.6), he was describing the mind as a manifestation of the body. Spinoza's statement parallels the central theme, *The Self Comes to Mind*, which is, in short, that 'the body is the foundation of the conscious mind' (Damasio, 2010, p.21). This

visual structure that is recorded and logged, like an image, it is a fully embodied experience that is logged or mapped, which includes a prejudiced history, previous consequences and unpredictable feelings. 'States of mind begin physically, and physical they remain' (Damasio, 2010, p.341). In observing what we recall about an object, it is clear, writes Damasio, that it is a *composite* of 'the interaction between the organism and the object during a certain period of time' (p.142). Damasio goes on to summarize: 'The brain holds a memory of what went on during an interaction, and the interaction importantly includes our own past, and often the past of our biological species and of our culture' (p.142). Therefore, Damasio would allow that we bring our autobiography to each interaction as a means to understand the world, in terms of biological value, and consequently to further encounter and grow self, which suggests we do this with each encounter with a statue as well. Our history, personal and collective, is part of the encounter.

What Damasio labels the autobiographical self calls for 'very elaborate coordinating mechanisms' (p.225). He writes that a conscious mind consists of a flow of images, 'a lived past and anticipated future' (Damasio, 2010), mediated by a subjective perspective, or an autobiographical self. The brain receives information about the world through the body or it recalls information logged through the body. Toward this end, the brain maps the body, creating neural maps or images of the body, to better gather information through the body about the world. 'Consciousness allows us to experience these maps of bodily experience as images, to manipulate those images, and to apply reasoning to them' (p.67), and it is then the perception of self that allows consciousness. ('We are only fully conscious when self comes to mind' (Damasio, 2011)). It is the mapping of experience in or through the experienced body form that is pertinent to the encounter with statues.

understanding of the whole body as mind suggests how we come to experience empathy with what a statue is *feeling*, and to read its *thoughts* and *intentions*. A statue's form is the outer manifestation of mind.

It is difficult not to believe that our mind and body are separate and that 'the mind lacks physical extension. I believe this intuition is false' writes Damasio,

Viewing the mind as a nonphysical phenomenon, discontinuous with the biology that creates and sustains it, is responsible for placing the mind outside the laws of physics, a discrimination to which other brain phenomena are not usually subject (Damasio, 2010, p.15).

This understanding suggests that the concept of the separation of mind and body is misleading. It seems implausible that the mind would be 'different in kind from the biological tissues and functions of the organism that begets it' (p.15). The important division is not that of mind and body but body, and an interior body manifestation of world. The division appears to be the difference between a close physiological bond with body and the internally mapped bond with the world. It follows that we use formerly mapped experience to encounter and comprehend the world with which we have no physiological bond; the body in the world is how we make sense of it and are connected to it. Accordingly, the form of the body must be particularly relevant to locating and knowing ourselves. For us, the form of the human body is the ultimate configuration or map of our experience. The form of the body is how we encounter and understand the world. A statue is a body—often an emotional body—form.

With an appreciation of the physicality of the embodied mind, and mindful that 'we see the mind with eyes that are turned inward; and we see biological tissues with eyes that are turned outward' (Damasio, 2010, p.15), what follows are the descriptions and discussions of experiences or encounters from periods of practice that took place during the course of my research that I have framed as projects.

The Projects

These projects are described from notes or audio recordings to demonstrate how my engagement with the figure and materials required *something* to change slightly in order for me to understand my encounter or my actions and their consequences differently. It was essential to approach the familiar routines and procedures of practice with an adjusted perspective that would both reveal and translate actions in the studio I could neither *see* myself doing, nor speak about much beyond what I *thought* I was doing with materials. This is the case for all the projects with the exception of *The Conversation Project*, which was performed within the bounds of practice but directly involved others and recording our conversations and therefore involved Ethics Committee approval and to disclose a method of analysis of the data.

The Conversation Project

October 2014- February 2017

The initial rationale for conducting conversations about statues was to record the way people spoke about past encounters with statues or what feelings or actions if any they attributed to statues⁷⁷. The data for exploring this encounter with statues was collected as informal conversations. The participants were invited to discuss statues and the conversations were allowed to be as brief or as lengthy as was natural in each case, occasionally shifting away from statues altogether. Through applying Grounded Theory Data Analysis (GTDA) as per (Glaser, 1992), to forty-four interviews, the experience of the parallel and untethered qualities of real and not real in statues as was apparent, as well as how encountering statues is not a rare or uncommon experience.

With the appropriate ethical approval in place, (documentation in endnote i), I began to record conversations about statues with volunteers. I sent an e-mail in July to a group who signed up during a show in 2014 at the ACA Gallery to receive “more information about having your thoughts about statues recorded.” Several responded and included people who had not been to the gallery. When approval was granted I began to meet people to talk.

I recorded conversations from 2014 through 2017. To examine the conversations, I made use of Grounded Theory Data Analysis (GTDA) as discovered by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 2006), and considered the method further through (Glaser, 1992) or Glaserian Grounded

⁷⁷ This is not an interest in specific language usage.

Theory. This method works to reveal the theory in the data, and for this project the core variable was related to the encounter with statues as spoken about by others. My aim for this part of the study of the encounter with statues was to document people speaking about statues, not to bolster any specific point. GTDA as an approach to data was well situated to reveal a theory from these conversations⁷⁸.

In brief, Glaser describes three primary constituents of analysis as:

(1) data collection, which soon becomes intricately involved with in (2) the methods analysis, that soon generate the concepts, hypotheses and their integration which results in the production of (3) written or verbal presentation (Glaser, 1992, p.13).

Because theory comes from or through the data in GTDA, the analysis takes place over time and in stages. As data are collected, coding, a primary method of the analysis begins. The codes that emerge from the data are topics or ideas that repeat or seem important, in this case, to people speaking about statues. These ideas or codes are then considered through memoing⁷⁹. I either wrote or recorded my thinking about what the conversations might reveal. An example of analysis through memoing came when I had made a significant number of recordings and realized through considering the codes I was discovering that I had never had to explain what a statue was to anyone, beyond that I wanted to focus on the human form.

⁷⁸ Again, I did not work from transcripts of these conversations, which I found unwieldy and confusing. Rather I made use of repeated listening and was able to find codes in concepts or similar meaning, i.e. references to *David*, the statue by Michelangelo, ranged from direct to "some big naked guy." Each was coded as a mention of the *David* statue.

⁷⁹ Memoing is the theorizing of ideas about codes and their relationships. Most of the memoing I did was recorded into my phone, although some was written.

It seemed clear from listening to the conversations that statues, whether large in a public space, or small at home, were known and had been considered to some degree by everyone I spoke to for this study. I accumulated twenty-one categories or codes from forty-three conversations. The code list was then considered, ideas and links were sketched out through memoing, and primary concepts began to emerge that explained the tendencies revealed in the data. Again, the data was not collected or considered proof of a hypothesis or concept I could articulate, the theories that were revealed through following the process are grounded in the data, and showed themselves through a slow consideration of that data.

It became clear that the nature of the conversations did not lend itself to transcription. I did transcribe several, but discovered that word searches were not the ideal way to code these conversations. The conversations were undirected and therefore, ranged very widely, and speaking about statues as if they are real people is subtle. I had the most success listening repeatedly to what was said and noting the context, and then coding after listening again. This is due partly to the nature of what became the theory gleaned from the interviews.

An example of what was revealed through the conversations is apparent in two quotes from conversations about my work recorded at a 2016 show of work from *The Sins Project* (described in Projects) completed for this study. "It is the

one on that side, over there, that is definitely looking at you” (2016) and “[when I see a statue] I expect some sort of movement from it” (2016). Neither statement is a particularly revealing comment about how we encounter statues; but in context the statements are conspicuous.

The first was a woman talking about how the eyes in figurative work are important to her and draw her in, and the other woman was knowledgeably speaking about her approach to art. She went on to say that although she admired the craftsmanship of the Lincoln Memorial (in Washington DC), that there is an “inherent dishonesty” (2016) in the material of statues because they look like they will move, but they don’t. (Videos 1, 2, and 3).

Of course my statue is not *looking* at the woman who claims it is, and she knows that, but in this situation she is faced with the difficulty of articulating what happens when it *feels* like a statue is looking. The other statement is more difficult to parse. To encounter statues considering them inherently dishonest and disappointing in their stillness obstructs the possibility of understanding them as objects. The concept that statues are false and disappointing concretizes the idea that statues are fake people, rather than an opportunity to engage with our assumptions, desires and the interwoven strangeness of material and image.

What follows is the beginning of another conversation recorded for this project in 2015 that lasted thirty-nine minutes. It demonstrates the speed and subtlety of answering *no* to a direct, although obvious question about statues thinking. The person I spoke with in this case responded with laughter to my direct question about statues, but immediately went on to speak about emotions related to the statue and how friendly and open it appeared.

Lisa Osborn (**LO**): Do you know what statues are thinking when you look at them?

Subject (**Sub**): No.

[Both laugh]

Sub: Uhmhhh . . . maybe, I think . . . I don't read thoughts into them as maybe like . . . emotions . . . or just a general demeanor . . .

LO: What about this one? [LO indicates a statue.]

Sub: It seems childlike and friendly . . . curious . . . open but not terribly aggressive or coming-into-your-space. The eyes are white. I think that is why it is not threatening (2015).

The subject went on to reveal that she doesn't like to have dolls or statues in her house because they appear to be watching. After discussing an encounter with a rubber snake on my porch, the woman connected the experience she had with the rubber snake to dolls. She spoke about repeatedly being caught unaware or surprised by dolls, 'they always register out of the corner of my eye as someone there watching' (Osborn, 2015, 8:59). This particular conversation ended with the woman expressing that she did not think my dog would similarly find empathy, experience the uncanny, or be caught unaware by a

stuffed bear, he would ‘just tear it up, probably,’ (Osborn, 2015), she said. She was aware that the feeling of doll or statue or stuffed animal eyes watching would probably not translate to animals, thereby suggesting it is not a real threat, but her unease with eyes was not dissipated through having this understanding. She retained a double or parallel perception of statues.

Around the core variable of others speaking about their encounters with statues, I accumulated twenty-one categories⁸⁰ (Code Key, Appendix i). The conversations were continually coded, and analysed through *memoing*, resulting in two particular theories that were further supported through diffraction with other theories emerging in practice⁸¹.

The two entwined theories pertinent to this study produced from analysing this particular data were these: of primary significance to this study was documentation of a duality frequently manifested when speaking about statues. Statues are spoken about convincingly as both real and not real, a kind of paradox, which corroborates my reading of Getsy’s *Abstract Bodies: Sixties Sculpture and the Expanded Field of Gender* (2015) and *Body Doubles; Sculpture In Brittan 1877-1905* (2004) as noted.

⁸⁰ The opening of the conversation above would have been coded: **NoBut**, meaning no was the answer to direct question about statues, but the conversation continued as if statues had human traits.

⁸¹ As an example, the way we speak about statues as real and not real directly corresponded to concepts in Getsy’s writing specifically, as well as Noë’s concept of access to knowledge.

The second (and more generalised) theory that appeared encompassed the significance of statues as literal placeholders for broader concepts or ideas exemplified in effigies or in the removal of statues, such as leaders or religious figures, when what those figures stood for is no longer supported, which also suggests a possible foundation for most literal forms of iconoclasm. However, this idea can still be said to fall under a parallel knowing and not knowing about person shaped objects. An overarching and useful indication was that people—even those who do not attend art gallery openings—have opinions⁸² and stories—often from childhood—about statues that are important to them. This suggests that statues are integrated into our engagement in the world and that they are (physically) accessible beyond the art gallery context. This theory also finds support in related literature, particularly where statues are used as examples as in Comay (2014) writing about Hegel and the defaced statues or in Oscar Wilde’s story *The Happy Prince*, which begins: ‘High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince’ (Wilde, 1997).

GTDA as a method functioned well throughout this project⁸³ and this study.

While I made formal and considered use of the method to analyse the conversations, I found the general structure of Glaserian GT—particularly the

⁸² A particular turn in several conversations was the Robert E. Lee Statue in New Orleans and whether it should be removed. A conversation that often moved to racism.

⁸³ See *The Slides Project* for further discussion.

emergence rather than forcing of patterns and connections—useful and to relate closely to the method of diffraction. I made use of and positioned my findings from this project throughout this study.

The Shusterman Project

March-April 2014

Photography as Performative Process

This project was designed to both engage new concepts and a *new* mode of practice. I began the process of data collection through practice with a literal acting out of a photography project recounted in *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*, by Richard Shusterman, (2008). Shusterman engages with Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida* (Barthes, 1982), while this project was designed to engage Shusterman's neologism *somaesthetics*, which appeared to address mind and body issues both practically and conceptually. It was also an initial effort to employ practice as research.

I designed a project with photographer DT Maynor, modelled on Chapter 11 in *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*, 2012 (p.239), in which Shusterman describes his encounter and experience as a photographic subject of Radiant Flux, a project by Parisian artist Yann Toma. In the chapter, Shusterman delineates his philosophy on photography, cites other writers and thinkers, contextualizes the project, and explains the steps and methods he and photographer Toma implemented to gain what Shusterman described as the 'transformation of an ordinary person into a photographic subject' (p.257).

Shusterman's focus is on the position of the sitter in a photograph, which he explores through Barthes discussion of his own self-consciousness.

I constructed a project⁸⁴ following Shusterman's description in his essay in which I would experience being the subject of another artist's artwork, or as Shusterman describes it, 'the performative process of making a photograph of a human subject, and the sorts of artistic and aesthetic experiences that this process involves' (Shusterman, 2012, p.241). This included reading Roland Barthes, and following the methods that Shusterman used working with a photographer. The goal was to understand what the transformation into a photographic subject meant, through a reasonable portrait of me in everyday clothes, while Shusterman wore a 'gold body stocking' (p.255), and Yann Toma painted his aura in light. The project was outlined carefully and performed with detailed records. When the photographer and I performed, and I read and compared Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, as Shusterman had, the results I experienced were different than Shusterman's but I experienced an enlarged comprehension of both Shusterman and Barthes work and experienced an altered perspective from which to base my interpretations.

For example, Shusterman interprets Barthes confession of self-consciousness when sitting for a photograph as vanity. After my experience being photographed for this project, my reading Barthes was that, in finding vanity

⁸⁴ Pictures and project draft in Appendix iii.

where he might not have expected it, Barthes, after a gentle, self-deprecating, reflexive confession, moves on to bigger ideas. Shusterman's focus was on the anxiety of how he appears to others and the consideration of how to improve or alter that appearance. (Appendix ii)

The photos resulting from this project are reasonable portraits of me. However, experiencing how making use of doing—not just sitting in a library thinking—to enhance my comprehension of both a primary and secondary text, allowed me to move the process specifically into my practice making statues.

This was straightforwardly transferred into the studio and provided a template for further methods to articulate investigations through practice. In discussions with the photographer, I also became aware of how necessary addressing the issue of self-reflection was to the success of this project. This project allowed the experience of performing practice as a means to research, and engaging concepts, and a clear decision on the issue of mind and body, which has been explored further in this study primarily through the work of philosopher Ava Noë (Noë, 2009) (Noë, 2015); neurobiologist, Antonio Damasio, (Damasio, 2003) (Damasio, 2010), and philosopher Graham Harman (Harman, 2010) (Harman, 2012) (Harman, 2016).

The Berlin Figure Project (Foam)

May-July 2014

Following the *The Shusterman Project*, I designed a project for the studio focused on materials. This project was an attempt to have work to show in Berlin during the 2014 Transart summer residency (attended as a requirement for this study). As I have suggested previously, the figures I make need the support of the studio. The work is large and the materials I work in—clay, cement, and steel—result in each piece being relatively fragile and heavy. I resolved to make six pieces, similar to and recognizable as my usual work, but that could reasonably be shipped to Berlin from where I live, in Louisiana. I imposed a weight limit and looked for alternate materials with which to copy four previously finished figures leaving two pieces to evolve from the new process. The materials I chose, (expanding foam, canvas, and PVC pipe) to construct these lighter pieces, delivered a lighter weight, and to some extent, a similar form, but did not *work* in the same way clay and steel do. Ultimately, I successfully completed all six figures and did ship them all to Berlin.

The six pieces I brought to Berlin were each two meters or more tall. I had the process of making the foam work documented in a short video by the photographer DT Maynor. This project reverberated throughout the rest of the study. The work I made in an alternative material, as copies were sufficient approximations (though awkward and in my opinion inelegant) of my work in clay. However, these pieces (clumsy lightweight copies of ceramic and steel statues) were less interesting than work that began to grow directly from the new materials and process. To me, this indicated that the engagement with material was influential on the outcome of the work. (Video 4)

While my aim was to make lightweight copies of my work, in altering the material only (not subject, overall intention, and it was still I who made the work), other forms and options for making the figure revealed themselves.

The experience of using materials that perform differently to make familiar work suggested to me that it is in the engagement of materials and myself through making that material matters. I was able to carry out making work in alternate materials that, as I became familiar with them, was satisfactory and intriguing enough to choose to work with some of the materials again. I discovered that while materials are fundamental to the work, they are not really particularly important to the finished artwork (beyond conservation or mobility etc.). The alternate materials allowed me to have figures for the Berlin residency, but shipping weight is not usually the focus of my work. I discovered that my work is, I suppose, a publication of a private experience⁸⁵. The materials appear to be primary to my engagement, but secondary and even a hindrance to my completed work.

The GoPro Project

March 2015 - September 2017

⁸⁵ The work does something other than illustrate ideas, it is a manifestation of something else as when artist Grayson Perry speaks about the art object itself, he says that he wants it to be more than something: 'I could think it up in the bath and just phone it in' (Perry, 2012), implying that for him, the art object is something further than an idea, or its concepts, which is perhaps what engagement with materials has to offer to concepts.

Early in this study, I again hired DT Maynor to film how I resolved using alternative materials in order to bring examples of my work from Louisiana to Berlin. I wanted to document the process and be able to show myself working with new materials in my studio when I presented in Berlin. However, I had difficulty working with an observer in the studio. I was self-conscious, and aware I might be *taking too long* with drawn-out material struggles, and I was hampered by having to remember to face the camera or the light. When I watched these videos, it was clear to me I was uncomfortable, and rather than just doing what I was doing in the studio, I was self-conscious, performing, and considering what I might be showing. (Video 5)

Exploring the concept of reflecting on reflection-in-action as per Donald Schön, I considered using a GoPro camera to document my work in the studio. A GoPro is a small camera that can be set to film continuously or can take a picture every thirty seconds, which can then be strung together into a kind of movie showing action in the studio. I chose to use the GoPro and the pictures for two reasons. The battery lasts about one hour filming or about four hours taking a picture every thirty seconds. Aside from the extended time advantage, the videos I would have to watch repeatedly were not so detailed as to be awkward for me and difficult to watch. I could get a good idea of what I did without having to feel self-conscious about every detailed move I made for hours. Also, because I wouldn't know exactly when the battery would die, I was free to assume the camera may or may not be on while I worked. This helped me to forget about the camera and to just do what I do in the studio.

I regularly set up the camera, left it to run, and watched the footage, usually about a week or so after it was shot.⁸⁶ Several categories rose as I applied Grounded Theory Data Analysis to the footage (Appendix ii), but very simply, the ultimate revelation was that I am the only thing moving in the studio. While this may at first appear a little simplistic, it is important, as this is not at all my experience of the studio, and led me to the understanding that while my practice and work in the studio is something I have constructed and invented, I do not comprehend it completely.

In short, I was faced with videos documenting my actual *experience* in the studio, which radically differed from how I described that experience.⁸⁷ The data collected through documenting my studio practice arrived at a particular result which supports both conclusions drawn from other studies completed in this project and concepts that are discussed particularly in (Schön, 1983) (Reflecting on reflection-in-action), (Harman, 2012)(sensual object), (Noë, 2015)(access to objects), and (Grosz, 2012)(concepts in relation to art and philosophy).

⁸⁶ I *shot* about 40+ hours of video, which roughly equals 90+ hours of documented studio time.

⁸⁷ In the past I have described it this way: “The studio is full of noise and moving around. It is things happening one after—or because of—another, sparking or overwhelming the ideas or possibilities that arise and decline. It is busy and loud and full of action.”

Making use of a GoPro camera to document my studio practice came directly from a diffractive approach to Schön and his ball player example. When I failed at writing and reflecting in the studio about what I did, I repositioned myself to take the role of a ball player watching her performance after the game is over. A similar approach to Glaserian GT on video was employed in a study called *Attuning: A Theory of Interaction of People with Severe and Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disability and their Carers* by Colin Rien Griffiths (2010), where the researcher makes use of video to collect data about the interaction of people who do not speak.

When GTDA was applied to my studio footage, the revelation was simply that I am the only thing moving in the studio. The theory became that my experience of the studio differs from what it appears I do in the studio. What I physically do in the studio was familiar and obvious to me when I watched the video. I recognized how much I move, and that I work on several pieces at once, partly due to the requirements of clay, and partly my own temperament, but before viewing it, I would not have described the experience I saw documented.

The Sins Project

July 2014- (Exhibition) September 2016

I structured a project to consider and engage ways that feelings might be transmitted or recognized in statues. I designed this investigation to address some of the vagaries inherent in my attempts to grasp the nature of affect, as presented by Teresa Brennan, as an unseen force.

Brennan makes use of the seven deadly sins as a technique to characterize affect. (Brennan, 2004, p.21) She writes that affects are primarily negative, that they are not endogenous and should, in this case be understood as 'mobile forces.' Brennan suggests that the negative affects 'are identical with demons and/or deadly sins' (p.21). She argues that 'the seven deadly sins are not acts. They are affects:' (p.21) and here she lists the sins as pride, sloth, envy, lust, anger, gluttony, and avarice. My plan was to construct nine figures, three figures at a time. I began with Gluttony, Avarice, and Acedia (sloth), then I would consider Lust, Wrath, and Pride; followed by Envy, an eighth sin described as a kind of meta sloth, and Love.

In *The Transmission of Affect* (2004), Teresa Brennan's discussion about affect focuses theoretical attention on the body and its attendant charges and energies. Affect, she suggests, circulates in and among and through bodies. It is an experiential state, it is contagious, and it isn't stopped by the boundary of the skin.

When Brennan suggests that the deadly sins are an understanding of the affects, it is important to consider that she is comparing the negative affects (like anger and pride) to early conceptions of demons or the seven deadly sins, where the sins were understood to be *passing passions* (Brennan, 2004, p.97) of the soul, and not imagined as specific acts or as endogenous. Her point is to show that, historically we have understood affect and have integrated

awareness of its character into the social. Like demons, affect is to be understood as something outside of us, something that gets *into* us, with effects on mood, thinking, and behaviour. (Brennan, 2004, p.21) Again, affect, says Brennan, is social, but it has a biological effect. What is significant about the way transmission occurs is 'the resistance it reveals to the idea that a foreign body— something from without— can enter into one's own' (Brennan, 2004, p.10). Brennan argues that it is vital to recognize that our perceived boundaries are permeable.

I began the first three pieces together, as outlined in the project plan, but only Gluttony conformed to my original intention. I wanted to make a figure of Gluttony, not the personification of gluttony or an obese person being a glutton, but a figure of bottomless want. Curiously, the other two figures, which I began as Avarice and Sloth, both became something else, altogether. Although there is more than this brief description at play, my goal was to explore how an engagement with affect might play out through the studio. Ultimately, I chose not to continue calling on (sins) negative affects. Engaging gluttony as an affect appeared to have a depleting effect on me, I wrote in the studio notebook that I didn't have 'the time or energy' (Osborn, 2015) to complete the two figures begun as Avarice and Sloth. When I chose to revise my intention in relation to the second and third pieces, they were finished within a few days having become less specifically sins and something more related to anxiety. I did complete nine pieces, which are documented in (Images 4-9) and (Video 6).

In relation to the Gluttony statue, I experienced affective transmission of some kind. If I follow Brennan, this was because I called in the kind of despair that the sin of gluttony engenders. I found it difficult to fully describe or understand what exactly had occurred, but that it did occur is significant.

Seattle University Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, Ali Altaf Mian describes the more recent affective turn as privileging 'human and animal bodies, sensation, and potentiality' (Mian, 2011). Susan Kozel, a professor of new media at Malmö University and a dancer says in her video, *Phenomenology In Five Acts*, that affect is 'liminal,' that it is 'what is conveyed in between gestures,' that affect is a 'shimmer or ripple' (Kozel, 2013). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes about affect as 'aspects of experience and reality that do not present themselves in propositional or even in verbal form alongside others that do' (Sedgwick, 2002, p.6). In *Cruel Optimism*, Lauren Berlant writes about,

The affective structure of an optimistic attachment, which outlines the tendency to do the same thing over and over and expect different results- to expect that this time, nearness to this thing will help you or a world to become different in just the right way (Berlant, 2011, p.2).

The *Affect Theory Reader* (2010) editors Melissa Gregg & Gregory Seigworth open their field-defining collection of essays on affect with this definition:

Affect is in many ways synonymous with force or forces of encounter. The term 'force,' however, can be a bit of a misnomer, since affect need not be especially forceful (although sometimes, as in the psychoanalytic study of trauma, it is). In fact, it is quite

likely that affect more often transpires within and across the subtlest of shuttling intensities: all the miniscule or molecular events of the unnoticed. The ordinary and its extra—. Affect is born in *in-between-ness* and resides as accumulative *beside-ness* (Gregg, 2010, p.2).

Addressing affect in a slightly more concrete way, Antonio Damasio writes in *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*, that Spinoza defined affect as an *ensemble* of ‘drives, motivations, emotions, and feelings’ (Damasio, 2003, p.8). Damasio addresses Spinoza as a scientist and not a philosopher, seeing merit in Spinoza attempting to understand human beings and define truth through the pursuit of joy and rejection of sorrow (Damasio, 2003, p.12). More difficult for a philosopher however is that Spinoza sees this pursuit as the definition of intuitive knowledge and so, truth.

Silvan Tomkins first discussed Affect Theory in his book, *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, in the 1960’s. For Tomkins, affect also refers to the *biological portion of emotion*. For example when we are surprised or startled our eyebrows go up and eyes blink. Tomkins suggests affective resonance—conveying or identifying the *feelings* of another nonverbally—is the first level of communication particularly in intimate relationships.

Tomkins and Spinoza’s (mediated by Damasio) definitions are noticeably more specific. Spinoza is also a hero of Brennan’s. She follows and expands his

approach to affect as well as building on Tomkins thinking about communication in her book *The Transmission of Affect*, while addressing her theories from a philosophical, feminist, and psychoanalytic position. It is through *The Transmission Of Affect* that I have taken a characterization of affect for this investigation.

I was not able to clearly grasp affect or its transmission through my practice. This is partly due to the structurally un-representable nature of affect. Through Brennan's book I did obtain an altered interpretation of the extent to which our perception of self-containment is illusory and permeable not only through sight, sound, and smell, but thought. The book had an enormous effect on my conception of the tacit, and of how that can be engaged. Brennan, writing about how hormones and bodily communications work, argues that, 'conscious linguistic thought is slower than communication that is unimpeded by reflection' (Brennan, 2004, p.141). My interest for this study leans more toward that unimpeded communication.

Finally, I completed the *The Sins Project* with nine figures as I had planned. Three male figures described above, three female figures and three pots, seen in the documentation photographs and videos (Images 4-9 and Videos 1, 2, 3 and 6). The three female figures worked as an antidote to the experience of calling on affect as the sins. The pots furthered an investigation of the nature of

the figure form and when a pot is a figure, or a pot with a head and hands or pots with figures on them.

The Giacometti Materials Projects

June 2016

My figures are tall and often quite slim. This is primarily a residual consequence of the processes that led to how I first constructed statues. The first tall figures I made began as large thrown cylinders. I discovered I could wrap clay around pipes and make even taller figures (heads on cylinders, actually). I often retain the tall cylinder as a form to work from (see Figures 45 and 46 for examples). I assume this is why my work is compared occasionally to that of Alberto Giacometti, occurring twice in eight recorded conversations during a recent show. In an attempt to address what may—or may not—be similar in my work to that of Giacometti, I read the book *Alberto Giacometti Works/Writing/Interviews*, (Gonzalez, 2006), an essay by Jean-Paul Sartre called, *The Search for the Absolute*, and an interview with Giacometti by Jacques Dupin called, *What Interests Me About the Head*, both in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, (Stiles, 1996), *Giacometti A Biography In Pictures*, (Hohl, 1998), and *Giacometti Portrait* (Lord, 2015 reprint). I began by taking the position that perhaps there are similarities in the work, although I do not find my work similar to that of Giacometti. Nor do I find my attitudes in his descriptions of his own approach to the figure.

In an essay about Giacometti, his friend Jean-Paul Sartre writes:

Why doesn't he try to achieve something perfect, relying on some reliable technique, instead of seeming to ignore his predecessors? But, for three thousand years, sculpture modelled only corpses. (1996, p.186)

While choosing not to make figures perfect is something I have interest in and have addressed elsewhere, I disagreed with dismissing three thousand years of statues. Sartre goes on to suggest that Giacometti 'shows us men and women already seen. But not already seen by him alone. These figures are already seen as the foreign language we try to learn is already spoken' (p.187). This passage is an interesting simile but it unfortunately suggests Giacometti is again reducing or distilling the essence of the human.

In the interview titled *What Interests Me About The Head*, Giacometti points to the way in which we look to the eyes of a statue, even when we know they do not see: 'even when you look at a blind man, you look where his eyes are, as if you could feel the eyes behind the lids' (p.189). Giacometti points out that we look at a blind man's eyes, but 'feeling' the eyes behind the lids is an impression rather than an explanation or theory of why this is so. I had no sense that Giacometti considered this looking interesting or even funny. His attitude relates back to my investigation of eyes in my work, to tactility, and to mistaking that the rules that apply to how he looks at humans applies to his heads.

I found little in the writing to be sympathetic with. In fact, I grew to further dislike Giacometti, the man, and his work, which had never particularly interested me. However, it was in looking at photographs and videos of Giacometti working in his studio, that I found similarities and a method to engage materials became clear.

Videos of Giacometti working in his studio provided the most potent connection. Watching Giacometti work in clay and in plaster I recognized exactly what he was doing and how it felt to work with his materials. I could *see* what he knew and what he was translating to the clay and plaster and even—I believe—understand his frustration with plaster. The photographs of Giacometti working in plaster on an armature particularly illustrated a method of construction I am very familiar with.

I chose two pictures to use for this particular project. One showed Giacometti working on a walking man figure in his studio, which showed me the scale he was working at and much about how the plaster was applied. The other photograph is of Giacometti's trouser leg and the floor of his studio. (Figures 33 and 34).

Giacometti often labels his plaster pieces as plaster worked with a penknife. This means he was working in both an additive and subtractive way with the plaster. I welded a similar armature to that of the *Walking Man* in the photo, and began.

I made the same mess and a similar figure. The figure announced itself almost at once. The plaster on the armature instantly suggested a slim figure. The *thinness* was certainly from the way the armature was designed, but what I sensed was that through having some familiarity with the figure and anatomy, and using these particular materials in this particular way, I believed I understood what Giacometti had felt in the moment the figure made itself known. I am not suggesting anyone can do this, nor that I made a Giacometti, only that my knowledge of the figure and plaster when joined with the particular armature Giacometti made use of, produces the familiar thrill of *figure* very quickly. (Video 7)

This experience suggested I had reproduced another sculptor's results by asking certain materials for a similar result. Any number of materials; glue, wood, lipstick, and shoelaces can all perform their tasks in a similar way to when last asked by a skilled user, but this particular event resulted in an

abstracted figure I had no particular interest in remaking, and even arrogantly assumed I could alter for the better, which proved not to be the case.⁸⁸

The materials had a voice in this project. I was able to reproduce work and a sense of figure I had not at all expected. This was a further indication of how specific materials inform work, and underscores a concept of a *collaboration* with materials, that echoed the *Berlin Figure Project* and underscores for me concepts about objects in Harman, particularly around the discussion of fire burning cotton (Video 9). Harman is pointing to object relations. Fire has a relation to cotton that among other things, disregards what is important to us about the cotton, that it is a bag, or a shirt or a ball. Materials or objects appear to have relations that play out predictably.

The Slides Project

May 2014

Early in this study I was reunited with a large plastic box of slides documenting my work from the early 1980s through to around 2004. I employed the task of reviewing these slides as an opportunity to practice my Grounded Theory Data Analysis skills. I looked through slides and scanned about an eighth—over two hundred—slides of past work to make use of. I was able to see (as per Schön's

⁸⁸ I had always thought the arms of Giacometti's *Walking Men* to seem stiff and ill-posed. In making the figure I find I completely understand the nature of the gesture. The figures have a different meaning in the gesture for me now. The understanding came though the experience of making the figure, and I can only describe it as I understand why the arms seem so stiff, discovering this posture to be the only solution.

reflection on reflection in action), through the most elementary employment of GTDA to slides of the most rudimentary work, what has concerned my practice, and how I have made use of skills and craft throughout my career.

Looking at work made while I was at Boston University School for the Arts it is clear I have a grasp of the figure. The portrait heads are adequate as is the drawing. In craft school, learning to master the potter's wheel required repetition. Faced with a hundred objects to glaze at a time, I had begun to write and draw quick phrases and pictures on each form. I could see that what I lacked in skill with clay was supplemented by the words and drawing. I remember that this work was difficult to photograph, the words often went around the outside rims of little bowls and cylinders and the drawings were inside the bowls or on curved surfaces. This was a medium I was not yet experienced with. I recognized that as my mastery of clay and glazing increased the figure began to appear as that object and the writing generally disappeared. (Images 10- 35 and Video 8). The figure emerged as a pot form⁸⁹. (Appendix iii).

Furthermore, these were early encounters with objects that could not be understood (or read) from one point of view. I made decals of Eadweard

⁸⁹ Through looking at, scanning, and organizing the large amounts of slide, I discovered coding that came from the attempt to manage the images. I had a file for drawings, one for heads, pots, pre-figures, figures, herms, and *Madonnas*. These categories exposed much about what has been relevant to me in practice.

Muybridge's photographs to go around pots, and carved images in slip that also went around the form. (Video 8).

An analysis of the data revealed two particular concepts about my work I had not understood before. One was the strikingly similar way I forced new content into early ceramic forms and content into my practice for this study. The approach was so literal, but eventually yielded results. The other, related finding was that my concerns thirty years ago are so similar to my current investigation. Objects that cannot be seen all at once, the feelings (or perhaps affect) that I want in the work that had to be written onto the pots, and haphazard treatment of the finished object.

In this early engagement with GTDA I became aware of its similarities and compliment to Diffraction. Diffraction also makes use of an approach to data or concepts that requires the researcher to consider objects or ideas as the locus of what is to be discovered, instead of testing hypothesis. Haraway asserts, 'a diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of difference appear' (Haraway, 1992, p.302). Ripples are in phase or cancelled out but both have to be recognized.

A brief discussion about GTDA is in order here. My experience of GTDA was that I was able to obtain theories and comprehend the data—any data—I applied the method to. However, my initial experience was confusing. I began by reading *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*,

by Barry Glaser and Anselm Strauss, (2006), and I further consulted *Basics of Qualitative Research 3E*, by Corbin and Strauss (2008), and found the coding strategies put forward (micro-analysis) to be overwhelming and difficult to manage; particularly because the data (transcripts of conversations) were not revealing much that was coherent or of concern to the study through analysis of the words. It was here I began the *Slide Project* to gain experience at coding and to step away from the conversations. I had not planned to make formal use in this study of the *Slide Project*, and so I was more exploratory in my approach.

At this point I also read *Basics Of Grounded Theory Analysis*, by Barney Glaser, (1992) and discovered the conflict and subsequent split between Glaser and Strauss that primarily focused on the approach to analysis, among other issues. Glaser's discussion and rigor differed from Strauss' in that Glaser considers concepts rather than coding through words, allows for a Core Variable, suggests that a plethora of rules [. . .] hamper creativity' (Glaser, 1992, p.6), and that good grounded theory should be readily modifiable' (p.24). Furthermore, Glaser defines the goal of Grounded Theory in his way: 'to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved' (Glaser, 1992, p.75). This approach resonated with my concerns. I had begun *The Conversation Project* wanting to document something I thought might be revealing about what people say about statues. This could have appeared to be a preconceived idea I was possibly forcing on the data, but Glaser (1992) argues that without it, GT 'will drift in relevancy and workability' (p.75). During analysis of the *Slides Project*, I began to grasp how GTDA worked.

I focused on concepts and what I saw in the work in a less rigid and purely visual approach to the data, working to discover what my work might reveal to me about me, and about it.

In searching for further evidence of using Glaser's approach versus Strauss', the article *A Critique of Using Grounded Theory as a Research Method*, (2003), by Information Systems Development Researcher George Allan supports my experience. Allan expresses that the micro-analysis coding described by Strauss and Corbin was 'very time consuming' and that 'so many words being picked over individually led to confusion' (Allan, 2003, p.2). This was solved by considering a core variable, and by considering 'key points [that] allow concepts to emerge' (p.2). In short, GTDA became a welcome part of practice, enhancing rather than clashing with diffraction and the bricolage of Levi-Strauss. I made use of it formally, as in *The Conversations Project*, *The GoPro Project*, and *The Slides Project*, while it played a role in my approach to other projects, data, literature, and concepts engaged through this study. GTDA is easily transferable to audio and visual data when the classic or Glaserian GT is followed.

The Broken Piece Project

August 2016

One of my large, clay figures was knocked over and smashed. I resolved to reassemble it. I had lost a part of the belly and remade that part in plaster and

mortar mix. There was some other damage that was also too severe to just glue together, and at these places I also made use of alternate materials. I sanded and painted the figure in a way that resulted in an impression similar to its original appearance. I then asked several people familiar with the piece if they recognized it, and they did. I then explained what had happened and asked if, knowing this, was it still the same piece? Most answered yes, but some, mostly those seeing the work as a commodity, said no, imagining I would be tricking a buyer or being dishonest in some way.

The broken piece retains its general character now it is fixed. A detailed comparison before and after it was fixed might reveal certain differences, but wear and discoloration resulting from two years on an outside porch had also altered the piece.

My aim was to consider what if anything had been lost or gained by repairing the statue that made it a different statue. Because it is technically an art object with a potential life beyond me, the work is altered because it is repaired. For me, here in the studio, it is the same piece. Perhaps, it is this particular situation that reveals the most about how *knowledge* about objects is situated in this project. It is almost contextual. In some ways, I know the most about the piece, but I am the least certain about its character or position, particularly as it relates to others. I do know that the statue is more than the clay, or the atoms of the clay. Some of what the work is made of has been remixed by breaking, and

added to by fixing. The statue was always more than what it is made of, and more than the effects it might have on people both before and after it was broken and repaired. The statue is not a facsimile of what it was before, but it is altered.

I return to this project in Chapter four.

The Canvas Marys Project

June 2017

I have continued to work with canvas in an effort to conclude the alternative material investigation, although more for my practice, than for this study. I wanted to make a veil for a head on a very tall canvas body, but I did not like the way the cloth *looked* draped over the head. I concluded I would need to create an armature to hold the veil up around the head, so the head was seen through the cloth but the cloth did not take the form of the head. I considered horns, like antlers.

The issue of a head with horns aside, I began to consider what to construct the horns from. I considered clay, which would allow the horns I would construct to look like horns or antlers. I could even cast deer antlers found in the fields nearby. I further considered how fragile the horns would be in clay and the work and time of making them in clay. When I considered steel, I thought about shape and how to achieve the form. The way I thought of the steel did not really

include horns but something more architectural. I considered the graduated diameters of the steel I already had and would need, and if the welder ground could be easily fixed in time to complete this project quickly.

In short, I was designing the 'antlers' with knowledge about materials. I considered which material would provide a solution; which would be most satisfying to make, or force the potent issue of a horned head, or provide an interesting solution but remain in the background. I was aware of considering a solution through material. I was thinking with what I know about and am able to do with material conceptually. The limits of my knowing about clay and steel, my experience and comprehension of my skills and tools in the studio, and the impressions (horned head or more hat like armature) I imagined either might imply were all fully engaged.

My engagement with materials led to thinking—not making—about how to make a new piece. I am aware that in this case the conceptual nature of working toward a solution came from making in the past. However, the piece must be made to fully realize the concept and to further inform work in the future. I was thinking with materials. Clay (and to some extent steel), as I engaged clay out of the studio, behaved like a concept for me that I could use—or not—to solve problems in my work.

Making my work requires my studio, and the way I experience it and what I do there. That I usually need to occupy some part of me with the radio or audio book suggests, perhaps, that the work is more than what I have access to through a particular kind of thinking. The work does something other than illustrate ideas, it is a manifestation of something else as when artist Grayson Perry speaks about the art object itself, he says that he wants it to be more than something: 'I could think it up in the bath and just phone it in' (Perry, 2012), implying that for him, the art object is something further than an idea, or its concepts, which is perhaps what engagement with materials has to offer to concepts.

While in the scope of this study I have not explored this further, beyond thinking that perhaps making is evidence of material "consciousness," (as in not a form of human consciousness). When I make work, it is usually different than my first thought about it out of the studio. The materials have input.

Conclusion

These individual projects reflect actions I have used in practice before in the studio, although performed here with new methods and concepts. This study as a whole is organized to show myself what has been happening in my practice making statues by introducing slight alterations in perspective and to then assess the differences. While I have drawn a map of where I have found particular ideas and concepts in the encounter with statues, these are my

landmarks, and originate from performing my practice. While a map is knowledge about a territory, as in the mind mapping the body (as per Damasio) or a road map, the map is not the territory and cannot exhaust it.

It is here Fitzgerald's 'ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function' (Fitzgerald, 1936, p.2) returns.

Using the methodology and methods outlined in the introduction, the theory and concepts that adhered to and expanded when exposed to practice, are the ones described and discussed in this writing. However, Philosopher Alva Noë speaks about skills and habits. He writes about how we can multitask—walk and carry on a conversation—and how habit becomes a useful tool to handle everyday tasks. He points out that our 'ability to carry on and be organized by the activity at hand, to—if you like—lose ourselves in the flow, is natural for us' (Noë, 2015, p.7). My practice has flow and therefore, habit, and so it may continue to elude me.

Furthermore, I have documented and discussed how we can speak about statues with 'two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time.' Fitzgerald's essay eventually explains that in holding two opposed ideas, we don't see that each idea is only a part of a very different truth the two make together. While Fitzgerald may have been regretting a misspent youth and middle age, I

repurpose his suggestion here as follows: when we hold on to the dual nature of our consideration of statues we are obliged to miss what is enlivening about them, what the two natures reveal when considered as one.

Noë makes a point about where the issue of habit lies, writing that we do not understand organized activities ‘that are structured by habit [. . .] by considering these phenomena only in relation to what is happening in the nervous system of the participants’ (Noë, 2015, p.8). Just as looking for the value of money in the bill is meaningless, the making use of self-reflection to resolve what we cannot see about our habits becomes futile without assistance. The value of money lies in what we, collectively, *believe* about the money. Similarly, the *value* of the statue is more than material or form, it is unreachable without at very least having united those two issues when encountering a statue, and then to further consider what *we, all together believe* about them.

In the next chapter I engage Object Oriented Ontology through my encounter with statues. My aim has been to indicate—by example—what can be gained by reconsidering our encounter statues, in this case with an ontology focused on objects.

CHAPTER FOUR

In this chapter statues are considered diffractively with concepts found in Object Oriented Ontology (OOO). These concepts initially came into this project through Graham Harman's book *The Quadruple Object* (2010), and subsequently through several of Harman's other books, talks, and articles. I do not argue for Object Oriented Ontology in philosophical terms, rather I have approached OOO as theory that attached effortlessly to—or aptly put words to—my experiences with statues and the encounter. Therefore, my approach here has been to discuss statues in terms of OOO, which led me to comprehend and conceptualize both statues and the encounter more clearly, and to better grasp and internalize the basics of OOO.

OOO has offered concepts to this study for articulating tacit knowing about objects gained through practice. Whether the theory first informed the concepts of practice or practice found words in the theory I am now uncertain, but the diffractive approach would accept either or both as accurate. My aim in this chapter is to put forward several of the primary ideas found in Object Oriented Ontology, and to indicate how engaging with these ideas informed, clarified, and enlarged this research. Additionally, OOO is used to articulate, contextualize, and enlarge outcomes of this study, including the motivating

concept of this project as a whole—which is that statues are person-shaped objects, they are something other than mere copies of people.⁹⁰

An article about Object Oriented Ontology titled, *What Is Object-Oriented Ontology? A Quick-and-Dirty Guide to the Philosophical Movement sweeping the Art World*, by Dylan Kerr (2016) will provide a suitable point of departure.

Kerr, perhaps unwittingly, outlines in the first few paragraphs of his article two misconceptions about OOO. These particular misconstruings directly impact this study. In order to situate Object Oriented Ontology as it is understood through this study, addressing what OOO is *not*—briefly in two cases through Kerr’s article—will assist in establishing a starting point for both the fundamentals of Object Oriented Ontology, and offer a view of statues through the lens of OOO.

Kerr begins the article by suggesting that OOO would have us ask ourselves, ‘What does your toaster want? How about your dog? Or the bacteria in your gut? What about the pixels on the screen you’re reading off now’ (Kerr, 2016, p. 2). The question *what do you want?* is generally one asked of people by other people, or humans so other humans will know what someone wants, and act

⁹⁰ An illustration of the vague assumption of objects shaped like people are merely lesser people would be the mannekins set up in the atom bomb test sites. The images are compelling and odd, and a good example of what would happen to fiberglass person shaped objects, but not at all what would happen to actual people. The bomb was not confused by or fooled—as we often are—by the person shape of the materials. (see <http://www.cultofweird.com/america/1955-a-bomb-photos/> or <http://www.themysteryworld.com/2012/05/pictures-show-aftermath-of-nuclear-test.html> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MG4hQQKrT8>)

accordingly. Asking this of dogs or pixels is ascribing human needs and characteristics to nonhuman things, and implies that we should anthropomorphize nonhuman life and objects to understand them more deeply. This is not at all how OOO approaches objects. Rather, OOO suggests we work to view the world of objects—that are not people or humans—as *not* people or humans. OOO would have us understand, by embracing a non-anthropocentric attitude, that my toaster and the bacteria in my gut have their own way of being and relating in the world and asking them anthropocentric questions isn't sensible.

An overarching concept or a basic assumption of Object Oriented Ontology is a direct opposition to the concept that philosopher Quentin Meillassoux has labelled correlationism. Meillassoux defines correlationism as 'the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other' (Meillassoux, 2009, p.5).⁹¹ In short, Meillassoux's definition captures a concept: that because anything we think is a thought, we only have access to the thought of the world meaning there is not a world (available to us) outside human thought. The consequence of this concept is that human thought and everything else is the primary relation in the world, which as Harman suggests, has been the position for much of philosophy since Kant. It implies that 'there is no use speaking about the relation between two non-human objects, a matter best left

⁹¹ Speculative Realism is the name given to the group of philosophers that met at a conference of the same name at Goldsmiths College in 2007. It is or was the opposition to correlationism (as defined by Meillassoux) that unites Speculative Realists.

to the sciences' (Harman, 2016, p.244). Object Oriented Ontology is in opposition to Kant's positioning⁹² of the human to world relation as taking precedence over all other relations (p.45). OOO therefore, situates human thought back into the world and positions objects and relations as the important divide. Human thought remains part of a human and humans differ in degree but not in kind from dogs, trees, and rocks.

Harman's view on Kant explains this positioning of human thought. In Harman's summary, Kant has two basic philosophical positions. This distillation of Kant's positions come from Harman's paper, *The Road to Objects*, (2011).

1. Human knowledge is finite, since the things-in-themselves can be thought but never known.
2. The human-world relation is philosophically privileged over every other sort of relation; philosophy is primarily about human access to the world, or at least must take this access as its starting point. (p.171)

Object Oriented Ontology is grounded in Kant's first position, that the things-in-themselves, the real objects, are not something we can never fully know. It is the second position, correlationism, or the assumption that the world is here

⁹² Harman expands the differences of OOO and correlationism in his book *Dante's Broken Hammer*, (2016).

because of or for humans, or that our consciousness functions as an integral part of the structure of the world, that OOO rejects.

However interesting we humans may be to ourselves we are apparently in no way central to the cosmic drama, marooned as we are on an average-sized planet near a mediocre sun, and confined to a tiny portion of the universe (Harman, 2010, p.63).

‘It is often assumed,’ writes Harman, ‘that the human relation to reality is one of transcendence’ (Harman, 2010, p.113). Objects—and other forms of life—are merely inanimate stuff or lumps, caught in our minds or in the flow of the world. ‘Humans are believed to rise above that world into a windy, starry space of freedom where they lucidly observe things “as” they are’ (p.113). To engage Object Oriented Ontology it is essential to embrace that the world—and objects—exist independently, outside of human thought. This is the first concept that begins to construct the perspective of Object Oriented Ontology as it serves to advance an altered discernment of statues.

Returning to *What Is Object-Oriented Ontology? A Quick-and-Dirty Guide to the Philosophical Movement Sweeping the Art World* (2016), Kerr goes on to write about Object Oriented Ontology rejecting human-centred ways of approaching the world, but suggests that ‘The whole idea that artworks exist only insofar as they’re available for human viewing and interpretation is entirely opposed to the post human perspective OOO promotes’ (Kerr, 2016, p. 4). This is not so. Kerr also makes reference to artworks ‘acting on viewers’ (p. 4), and that

Speculative Realism and OOO are 'dedicated to exploring the reality, agency and "private lives" of non-human entities' (p. 2). That OOO is opposed to human-centred viewing and interpretation of artworks is misconceived, in fact it is exactly opposite, and this error appears to be a common misunderstanding of the position of OOO toward art. The human perspective of art is something Harman suggests is the point of artwork.

First, Harman says that art without humans is like 'basketball without humans' (Harman, 2015, @2:30), it would not be very interesting or even possible. As John Dewey points out, the art is in the experience or the encounter. Art objects are constructed to be an experience for us, related to us. A statue outside, in a garden or cemetery, has to be kept clear of vines. Vines are not discouraged or influenced by the human shape of a statue. Similarly, a statue as a person-shaped object isn't usually required to wear clothes in public, vacate the museum at night or come inside for dinner, or out of the rain or snow. A statue or human-shaped object is not a person, and is not significant in this way to vines, rain, lightning, the ground, except to us. An object shaped like a person is made for us to experience, sometimes as art. Very little else in the world would encounter a statue in the way we do, although everything else in the world can encounter a statue. Firing clay body parts in my kiln is not like cremation of a human body in any way, except that it is similarly conducted event. A moulded clay head does not trick the kiln; the kiln will not incinerate the head as if it were the head of a person. When I open the kiln I will find a vitrified clay head and not ashes.

Anthropomorphizing objects does not suit the Speculative Realism of OOO.

Humans are not central to the universe in this ontology, instead we are asked to consider that—just as humans do to each other and to objects—objects must also relate to objects. It is relations, rather than humans, that are the more central concern of OOO. The important divide is objects and relations, not humans and the world. We are asked to consider that a rock relates to other objects in a way that is similar in kind, if not in complex degree, to the template of our relations. This relocation of human thought is not banishment; OOO does not want to do away with people, just to acknowledge what objects are and the nature of relations. Again, in a way similar to, for example basketball (which requires people), I contend that statues are objects that require humans to be seen as human shaped and therefore as statues. While statues do not require the presence of people in order to exist as objects, they do require the presence of people to be seen as art objects shaped like people (statues). Statues are the human form constructed and interpreted by humans, to be considered by humans. Statues are—to a degree—anthropomorphized material. Statues are made for humans alone to consider. The clay (and perhaps steel and concrete) and the form that makes up my particular work (or statues) is not *a person* to a cat or to moss, it may not even appear to be a *human figure*. Conceivably, the cat does encounter a large vitreous mass, but does not encounter, for example, the figure of Gluttony or even a human form when it encounters my statue. The moss that might be growing on my work is making use of the vitreous clay or concrete and not the human form.

Objects

In *The Quadruple Object* (2010) Harman begins his discussion of objects by examining what he calls the overmining and undermining of objects. He initiates his discussion of Object Oriented Ontology by pointing out the broad iconoclasm of philosophy.⁹³ He argues that ‘most western philosophies try to get rid of objects’ (2015, @3:28) through reducing them to a smaller elemental building blocks or, to ‘reduce them upward’ (2010, p.10) where the object is only part of an event or a moment. Harman suggests that either position is usually considered to be the reasonable focus of philosophy, and not the objects themselves. Undermining objects looks to what an object is made of, whether it is the “element” of air or water or atoms. Harman points out that in undermining we look for what we assume to be the *real* thing that makes up an object, such as its qualities, or atoms, the assumption is that an object is made of something smaller and more real, which ignores the object itself as something real, as a *mysterious* unity or thing in-itself. An object cannot be exhausted through knowing about the elements or atoms or qualities that make it up, and an object cannot be reduced to or manifested through knowledge. To know that a statue is made of clay (or atoms) is almost directly in opposition to perceiving or encountering it as a figure. If Dalou’s gisant of Victor Noir is reduced to the atoms that make it up or to the bronze it is cast in,⁹⁴ the impact

⁹³ See (Harman, 2015, 3:10) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cR1A4ILPmjE>

⁹⁴ (conceivably, the bronze could be melted down, and then cast again as a bronze leopard at the zoo)

of the statue of the corpse of a man long dead or the apotropaic nature he has more recently acquired is unavailable or lost.

To overmine an object is to consider the object to be only what it is in relation 'to the mind, or . . . some concrete event that effects other objects as well' (2010, p.11). Overmining deems objects to be what they do, or are in the moment, which does not afford an object the possibility to change or to differ from what the object is or appears to be at any particular time. Here again Dalou's gisant is a good example of the limitations of overmining an object. What the gisant of Victor Noir does now differs from its initial purpose and what it was designed to do. The statue has depths, potential, or more available to it than even Dalou (its maker) could have envisioned.

Harman argues for the unified object. He agrees 'that all entities are composite, made of smaller things . . . but in no way does this prove that only the smallest things are real' (Harman, 2012, p.8). Rather than say objects are nothing more than atoms, which implies atoms are more real than objects, or suggest that objects are nothing more than they superficially appear to be, Harman asks us to accept an object as a thing that cannot be reduced down to smaller parts, and cannot be exhausted through knowing or knowledge about it, the object is withdrawn and retains hidden depths and cannot be fully known.

In summary, Harman defines real objects, after an interpretation of Heidegger's tool analysis, as 'withdrawn into private interiors, barely able to relate at all'

(Harman, 2010, p.36). He argues that real objects exist, individually, in a world unknown, withdrawn, and unavailable. Harman approaches objects as unknowable unities, and not as a knowable bale, or bundle of identifiable parts or, traits that, packaged together, make up the object. He does not explain objects as rising up from tiny bits of an elemental substance nor does he find objects to be part of the original whole of everything, or merely all they appear to be in the moment.

We cannot exhaust an object through our relation to it. Just as we cannot know the potential of the Victor Noir gisant, or have the object appear in front of us through our knowledge of it. Clearly, what we know about the statue does not exhaust or equal it in this way. It is here that the composite or sensual object—an object that contains ourselves and our perceptions and ideas about another object—becomes relevant. My statues, even though I make them and know about them, cannot be exactly copied, even by me, or made from a mould and be the same object, which, tangentially, is why *The Broken Piece Project* was significant to this study. It became an exercise in testing the degree to which a piece could alter and still be said to be the same piece. Had I remade the statue from scratch, it would be a replica of the original, but because I repaired it instead, it retains a unity, and remains the same object. An object remains itself even when it sustains small losses, like a repaired sweater, or a glued statue. The mysterious unity of objects, and not the attempt to distil them, is the focus of 000.

I will step away from specifically quoting Harman for a moment, and give an example of using the studio to engage what I was reading of his work particularly. I explored, in an elementary way and exemplified through an obvious exercise, when I make several objects in the same material and shape—in this case baby doll heads—what makes each head a separate head or object. These heads were cast as part of the larger work made with artist Mary Morgan. While it is common sense that the heads are not the same object, I found the exercise useful. I cast six doll baby heads, from the same slip, in the same mould. I fired them all together in the same kiln, which means they were all in a similarly vitreous⁹⁵ state. (Image 36).

The heads were all made in the same shape, of the same material, but each is an individual head. The objective was to experience the objects as the same, but to encounter the separate unities as the way the objects differed from each other. With the focus on the unity of objects in mind, that the heads were not interchangeable and were individual was, naturally, absolutely demonstrated.

Why this was so, was suddenly less clear to me.⁹⁶ I made a doll using one of the

⁹⁵ Vitrification is what firing clay to high temperatures achieves. It is the melting of the silica in clay to glass. This is what alters clay into a more stone-like substance and is why fired ceramic does not melt in water.

⁹⁶ To draw out the baby doll head experiment, I can smash one with a hammer and still have five. I can make one blue and still have four baby doll heads that are the same, but mysteriously separate unities, and not the same. Further, I can wipe the blue off the head, and it is still the same head, or attach it to a body, where it is still the same head, but becomes part of a baby doll, that has its own unity that the head is part of. Beyond the obvious and common sense of the six separate heads, there is the curious nature of individual objects that each have some difference that is not obvious to me.

heads. The head became part of a doll. I smashed the head, and replaced it with another one of the heads. The doll remained the same doll. The unity of an object is the central issue, or point, or concern here, and is the satisfying mystery in Object Oriented Ontology. (Video 10)

Relations and The Encounter

There are two important concepts to appreciate, through OOO, about the encounter for this study. First, to regard the human position as ‘in no way central to the cosmic drama,’ in that we differ ‘only in degree’ (2010, p.45) from other unified objects. Again this situates us in the world slightly differently than we are perhaps used to, and suggests that the world outside thought is significant and necessarily ascertainable, and although our self-investigation is ‘in no way central to the cosmic drama,’ it is no less important. It is perhaps through embracing this position that realizing object relations is facilitated.

Secondly, that we do not exhaust an object through knowing that object or being in relation to it. Harman uses the example of Berlin, the city in Germany, to illustrate the bounds of knowledge. No matter how extensive and complete my knowledge of Berlin is, writes Harman, ‘if Berlin were wiped from the face of the earth, my knowledge of it could not heroically step in and become a new city in its place’ (Harman, 2016, p.245). This is similarly true for my ballpoint pen. The knowledge that replaces it is where to buy another one.

Even the *Broken Figure* repaired is not exhausted through my intimate knowledge of it. Although I made the statue and repaired it, and so it is the same statue repaired, but I have not manifested the same object through my knowledge of it. Like Harman's knowledge of Berlin, I have mended a broken statue that continues to function as a statue, I have not replaced the object with my knowledge of it, suggesting the object has depths I have not and cannot plumb.

This draws us toward an explanation of the sensual object, which is where the encounter with statues takes place. We do not have full knowledge of objects and must relate to them through perception. Harman writes that 'all relations between all objects translate, distort, or caricature those objects; after all, [the objects] are never fully at play, and are reduced by such relations to something other than they are' (Harman, 2016, p.242). We do not exhaust an object, nor can we replace it with knowledge about it. A map is knowledge about a place, but does not exhaust, nor can it supplant, that place.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ *On Exactitude in Science*, a story by Jorge Luis Borges.

... In that Empire, the craft of Cartography attained such Perfection that the Map of a Single province covered the space of an entire City, and the Map of the Empire itself an entire Province. In the course of Time, these Extensive maps were found somehow wanting, and so the College of Cartographers evolved a Map of the Empire that was of the same Scale as the Empire and that coincided with it point for point. Less attentive to the Study of Cartography, succeeding Generations came to judge a map of such Magnitude cumbersome, and, not without Irreverence, they abandoned it to the Rigours of sun and Rain. In the western Deserts, tattered Fragments of the Map are still to be found, Sheltering an occasional Beast or beggar; in the whole Nation, no other relic is left of the Discipline of Geography.

—Suarez Miranda, *Viajes de varones prudentes*, Libro IV, Cap. XLV, Lerida, 1658 (Borges, 1998, p.325)

Important in understanding what the sensual object is or contains, is that it is a 'composite' (2016, p.246) of a real object, for example me (a real object), and my perception of or relation with an object. When I encounter the Baby Doll head, I do so through my current perceptions of the qualities of the head and former experiences with the head. I am real and the head is real, because two real objects cannot touch, my encounter with the head is through a third (sensual) object that contains me, and my perception of the head. To be clear, Harman says that not even parts of real objects make contact, because 'there is a sense in which objects have no parts' (2010, p.73). This aligns with the mysterious unity of the object. An object can lose parts and still be the same object until, at some ill-defined point, it loses enough that it isn't anymore and the unity is lost; then that object would be unrecognizable and not itself anymore. If parts could touch, an object would be a bale of parts, and this is specifically not how an object is defined in OOO. I argue that when we can conceive of a statue as a mysterious unity—as an object we cannot exhaust through our knowledge of what it is made of or what it does—and when we can consider that our encounter is with the form of these objects—which has a particular significance for us as people, but does not have a similar importance for anything else

In undermining an object or reducing an object to atoms, we observed in the *Broken Piece* exercise that objects can 'withstand certain changes in their

arrangement without ceasing to be the same [object]' (2010, p.117). When I encounter Michelangelo's *Pieta*, that her hand and nose were smashed and repaired does not suggest a different statue however many atoms that displaced. The statue is still Michelangelo's *Pieta*. The gisant of Victor Noir has mutated from the political to the personal, but it is the same object. Even universities are still the same entity, or institution, although every term brings different students, faculty, locations, and affiliations.⁹⁸

That objects are not exhausted by their relations indicates in part, that we can't exhaustively know everything about an object, and that our relation to an object is commonly constrained as a human centred relation. We relate to objects generally in terms of ourselves, both personally and collectively. OOO further offers us the understanding that objects relate to other objects in the same way. This situates us in terms of objects and relations. Statues as objects are human focused (by humans, of humans, for humans), but not human objects. Our relation or encounter with a statue is with an object shaped somewhat like a human (we are incorrect when we consider a statue to be a replica of a human) and therefore with an object in a form potent (as per Damasio's mapping) for us.

⁹⁸ Harman writes about an institution—specifically the Dutch East India Company— as an object in *Immaterialism*, (2016) Polity Press.

As a move toward broadening the definition of objects (and to further address the sensual object through which we encounter them), I will focus on the (mysterious) unity of objects by making use of an object that isn't real. The Tin Woodsman provides an example of the unity of an imaginary object. In the book, *The Wizard Of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, the Woodsman—before he becomes tin—had fallen in love with a beautiful Munchkin Maiden. The Wicked Witch also wanted the girl, and put a spell on the Woodsman's axe. While he is chopping wood in the forest, in order to make money to win the maiden, his axe cuts off his left leg. He manages to drag himself home and asks the tinsmith to make him a prosthetic leg, which goes very well. On subsequent trips into the woods he loses his other leg, then both arms and his head. All acceptably replaced by the tinsmith.

I thought I had beaten the Wicked Witch then, [. . .] but I little knew how cruel my enemy could be. She thought of a new way to kill my love for the beautiful Munchkin maiden, and made my axe slip again, so that it cut right through my body, splitting me into two halves. Once more the tinsmith came to my help and made me a body of tin, fastening my tin arms and legs and head to it, by means of joints, so that I could move around as well as ever.
(Baum, 1900, p.58)

As we know, the Tinsmith forgot to replace the Woodsman's heart. Without his heart, the (now) Tin Woodsman could no longer desire or love the beautiful Munchkin maiden. However, the Wicked Witch had not completely won. The Tin Woodsman wants nothing more than to go to Oz and gets his desire back. The Tin Woodsman replaced all his parts, one by one, and remained himself.

Even without his heart and desire, he was still himself, and knew to try to get his heart, his desire, replaced.

The unity of Tin Woodsman as an example of the unity of even the imaginary, real and sensual objects we encounter. The Tin Woodsman is a unified albeit imaginary object. He completely replaces his body with tin prosthetics, but he remains himself.⁹⁹ We recognize the qualities of the Tin Woodsman if we are familiar with a particular culture. In 1995 sculptor John Kearney made a statue of the Tin Woodsman for OZ park in Chicago. We recognize the Tin Woodsman. The statue is a real object. The statue is in the shape of an imaginary man/munchkin whose body was replaced in tin. The statue is a real object, the form is recognizable and imaginary and not real.

Harman opens *The Quadruple Object* by affirming we are all concerned with objects. He defines an object as 'anything that has a unified reality that is autonomous from its wider context and also from its own pieces' (Harman, 2010, p.116).¹⁰⁰ Harman explains that he includes and accounts for entities that are neither physical nor even real (like the Tin Woodsman, unicorns, and

⁹⁹ Suppose someone thought the Tin Woodsman was the character that went to Oz for a brain, when actually that was the Scarecrow. When that someone is told that it was the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman does not become the Scarecrow for that person, the Tin Woodsman is unified enough to withstand a misunderstanding about who he is to remain himself. We see that the Scarecrow went to Oz for a brain and the Tin Woodsman for a heart, and not that the Tin Woodsman becomes the Scarecrow. See *Graham Harman on Heidegger and The Arts* (2013, pp.20:00) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W93DtzHCcnM&t=8s>

¹⁰⁰ The Woodsman replaces his parts with tin and became the Tin Woodsman but is still the same guy who loved the Munchkin Maiden. He remained intact.

narratives¹⁰¹). Harman clarifies that while objects are not all equally real, they are all equally objects. 'Some objects' writes Harman, 'are physical, others are not; some real, others not real in the least. But all are unified objects, even if confined to that portion of the world called the mind' (p.7). Again it is the unified nature of an object that is its most interesting and mysterious feature.

Object Oriented Ontology and the Encounter

Object Oriented Ontology entered this study through examining the encounter in the question, *what happens when we encounter a statue* through the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. The idea in Levinas that stood out as relevant to the encounter has two entwined elements. The first point is that Levinas posits there is no universal moral law, or *ought*. It is each relationship, each 'encounter with the other' (Levinas, 1989), moment to moment, that creates its own *ought* or ethics. In this, Levinas suggests that the encounter with the other is where morality comes from. (Levinas, 2000).

Similarly, Philosopher Paul Ricoeur quotes Levinas when Ricoeur discusses the implied responsibility the self owes the other, which is that there is 'no self without another who summons it to responsibility' (Ricoeur, 1992, p.187). Again Ricoeur quotes Levinas, writing, when asked "Where are you?" [by another who needs me] the response is the following: "Here I am!" a response that is a statement of self-constancy' (Ricoeur, 1992, p.165). This *response*

¹⁰¹ Here again, we see that ideas and narratives are considered objects.

illustrates that we are embedded in context with the other and this encounter is where *ought* is.

However, when Levinas defines ideas (or concepts) as ‘inventions of the mind’ and, again, argues that thinking is ‘not the reflection of transcendence’ (Levinas, 2011, p.40), he draws a distinction between the encounter with a real person and the idea of the person.

[T]hen, anytime I take the person in my idea to be the real person, I have closed off contact with the real person; I have cut off the connection with the other that is necessary if ethics is to refer to real other people (Beavers, 1990, p.3).

Levinas sets the encounter in terms of a reciprocal relationship with another or living other. He also has set up the idea of a third person in the encounter. There is I, the other real person, and my idea of the other person.

The notion of the third person opens to two further insights: that the encounter can similarly be thought of as a *third thing*, and that the encounter with a statue is not the encounter with the other in human terms. The realization that statues

are *exsanguinated*,¹⁰² that they are objects and are not people has been an obvious but defining point in this study.

The vital ethical importance of the Levinas-ian encounter is that morality is implied by the presence of the other. However, the distinction of real person from idea-of-a-person is situated in this project as the encounter of a person (we) and a person-shaped object. This is not an encounter with the other as a person this is an encounter with an object. A statue is not a person; it is person shaped. In the crystallization of this understanding lies the beginning of an altered perception of statues.

As this study began I assumed that the encounter with statues was with the *other* in an altered form. This suggests I also unwittingly considered statues to be a lesser copy of ourselves, or perhaps a simulacrum¹⁰³, although I knew statues were not people. Furthermore, during this study I documented several people mentioning, in jest, the idea of statues moving when we aren't looking¹⁰⁴, a talent not usually assigned to other objects. In examining this perception, dismissing statues as merely disappointing replicas of us, swings too far.

Rather, if we conceive of a statue as an object shaped like a person (as opposed

¹⁰² Statues are similar to the superior puppet as described by Von Kleist. See puppets, Teresa Brennan and affect in chapter 1.

¹⁰³ See Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* 1994, page 6.

¹⁰⁴ Moving statues are here considered to be frightening and miraculous respectively
http://tardis.wikia.com/wiki/Weeping_Angel
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CRkF8fNFj0>

to a faux person), when we encounter this object we will have already begun to allow statues to call into focus our assumptions about objects, relations, and ourselves.

Our encounter with a statue is made up of ourselves and our perceptions of and assumptions about the statue. The encounter is a third thing or object similar to our idea-of-the-other that Levinas supposes to interfere with our connection to the real other. The encounter mediates between me, as a unified, unfathomable object and the statue, which is similarly a unified mystery. A statue has very little in common with people other than shape, and shape is not the totality of either statues or people. If my assumptions include considering statues to be people or copies of people, statues will always disappoint.

Furthermore, my encounter with a person or a statue is not the same encounter or identical to the encounter of that person or statue with me. In this we can grasp that relations are not specifically transitive. My encounter with you mediates my relation to you; your encounter with me mediates yours. Harman points to this stating that 'any relation immediately generates a new object' (Harman, 2010, p.117), i.e. each encounter is a different or new sensual object.

Harman further argues that objects also encounter each other through this kind of third sensual object. While we may have more complex or diverse relations with objects and people than rocks, OOO puts forward that relations—of any

kind— are all fundamentally the same, that our relations with objects differ in degree, but not in kind from the relations of object to object. The encounter or sensual object is the means through which relations occur. Our encounter with a statue does not exhaust the statue anymore than the statue can fully deplete or know us. My encounter with you is a third thing or object, just as your encounter with me is. Similarly the mechanism for the statue encountering either of us or another statue is a comparable third object.

More on Relations

For Harman, the ‘form of contact between things’ (p.120) is a sensual object, because the real object cannot be fully known, exhausted or comprehended, a third object comes about as our encounter. Harman has proposed that all relations are ‘on the same footing, and because all relations are equally inept at exhausting the depths of their terms, then an intermediate form of contact must be possible’ (Harman, 2010, p.120). Things do relate to other things. (I do alter material in the studio, I do fix and move statues, I do have on-going and changing relations with and interests in statues still in the studio and ones I have moved to my house). The sensual object is made of our past and present experience and perceptions of the object and our selves, or for example, my encounter with a statue contains me, and my history, my intentions and skills, my past and present experience and interests, and perceptions of statues¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁵ This sensual object does not contain full or exhaustive knowledge of the statue, I cannot make this statue appear through my comprehension of it, nor will I ever have full knowledge of its past, the material it is made of, or its future.

It is through the sensual object that this relation occurs. The sensual, however, is not a second 'fixed site' (Harman, 2010, p.110) writes Harman, nor is it found only in the experience of humans and animals. The division is not the real and the sensual, (or human thought and world, the division is objects (every thing) and relations. This is why Harman argues that object relations differ from human relations not 'in kind but only in degree (2010, p.45). This suggests that in my encounter with a statue, the statue also has an unrelated encounter with me through a sensual object. Harman uses the example of fire burning cotton.

(Video 9)

In this short video I burn cotton balls, wads of cotton batting, pieces of a cotton shirt and an entire cotton bag. The fire burned the cotton whether it was balls, batting, shirt, or bag. While Harman agrees that *human experience* is, no doubt *richer and more complex* than the relationship of fire to cotton or rocks to riverbeds or my kiln to the clay bodies it fires, what he is pointing to is 'whether the difference between human relations with [cotton] and a flame's relation with [cotton] is different in kind or only in degree' (p.45). Harman is putting forward that there is one kind of relation between objects, the sensual, and that this is how all relations operate, for the relation of people to people, rocks to people, rocks to rocks, rocks to vines, vines to statues.

What is important to account for in the encounter through Harman for this study is two-fold. First, that the human position is '*in no way central to the*

cosmic drama, in that we differ *'only in degree'* from other unified objects, like trees and statues. This situates us in the world slightly differently than we are perhaps used to, although nothing indicates that self-investigation and knowledge should be any less important to us, just that it is less of a specific or exhaustive method for comprehending the world itself. Secondly, that an object is not *'exhausted by the presence of another, with no intrinsic reality held cryptically in reserve'* (Harman, 2010, p.12). We can never exhaust an object or have absolute knowledge of it even through having made it our selves. Through making my statues I have insight into them, but not absolute insight.

To reiterate, Harman advances that there are two kinds of objects: Real objects, such as the *Pieta*, and sensual objects, which exist *in relation to the perceiver'* (Harman, 2010, p.110). My experience of Michelangelo's *Pieta* as a sculptor and a mother is probably quite different than the experience a child might have, or someone tasked with cleaning the marble. I do not know nor can I exhaust what or who the statue is in material or in image, although I have considered, and experienced both the material and subject many times. The *Pieta* cannot be returned to the block of marble, nor can we know what role it might play in the future. I cannot even see the whole object in the moment standing in front of it. Therefore, just as my role as a sculptor or mother does not exhaust who I am, my perception and experience of the *Pieta* does not exhaust what it is as an object. I experience the *Pieta* through the mediation of a sensual object. This is evident in a similar way through my work. I cannot unmake my statues or return them to unfired clay, my statues are more than the materials they are

made from and more than my intentions. As it was for Jules Dalou, I do not have command of everything I have instilled in them or what the form, context, and materials may indicate beyond my intentions.

In summary, the real object is remote, removed, reserved, or introverted.

Harman uses the word withdrawn, meaning real objects are not fully available to us or to each other. He writes that objects, or:

the things-in-themselves remain forever beyond our grasp, but not because of a specifically human failure to reach them. Instead, relations in general fail to grasp their relata, and in this sense the ghostly things-in-themselves haunt inanimate causal relations no less than the human-world relation, which no longer stands at the center of philosophy (Harman, 2011, p.171).

For Harman, the sensual object is a descendant of Husserl's intentional object (Harman, 2011, p.173). In short, sensual objects are those that exist in

experience. Sensual objects are a perception, or experience of the real object.

The concept of the sensual easily connected to Levinas' *inventions of the mind*.

The concept of the person in one's experience or perception being mistaken for the real person, whom we cannot know everything about, allowed this study entrance into Harman's ontology, although Harman does not find sensual objects in the mind. The sensual object exists outside the mind and is made of, in the case of myself viewing a statue, my perception, ideas, concepts, and knowledge of the statue, and me.

I wrote Harman asking where exactly the sensual object is located. (My concern in asking this question was how to imagine the sensual object). His kind response, dated April 5 2017 was this:

In any case, I thought your question "where is the sensual object?" really hit the nail on the head, despite your disclaimers of not having had philosophical training. (Such training often does little more than kill the imagination and turn one into an enforcer, I'm sorry to report.)

As you correctly guessed, the sensual object does not exist inside the head. Instead, it exists inside the new object that is formed through the combination of me and the object I perceive. So for instance, the tree as sensual object exists not inside my head, but inside the composite object formed of the real me and the real tree. (And the same holds for the sensual version of me, assuming that the tree encounters me in some way, as I would think it does.)

Harman points out that 'any relation immediately generates a new object' (Harman, 2010, p.117). This implies then that my encounter with a statue is a new object. This new object includes my perceptions of the statue (including my understanding of what or who is being referenced to by the object) and me. This encounter is a sensual object because it relies on my perceptions and me to exist. If I fall asleep, or die for example, the sensual object no longer exists, although the statue will continue to be an object in the world.

As a studio-based example of a sensual object I will consider my relation or encounter with my kiln. My relation to my kiln is a sensual object that includes my thinking about, or perception of, my kiln, which includes what I know about

its history and the history of kilns generally; where I bought it, what I believe it does with and for my work, modifications I've made to it, things I do and secretly do not understand about it, but all this knowledge and skill together does not equal the kiln in itself, or even have much effect on what the kiln does to clay. Knowledge about the kiln or the function of the kiln does not correspond exactly to the kiln itself. As an example, my knowledge and lack of knowledge about the electricity that allows the kiln to fire my work has little or no effect on the kiln. The electricity does what electricity does and is not hindered by my lack of comprehension of how electricity works, or my skills at installing the elements in the kiln. The electricity flows through the heating elements with indifference toward the kiln, toward me, and toward my knowledge of how any of it actually works. In short, I do not have an exhaustive knowledge of an important object in my studio, yet I am able to modify it, to fix it, to mostly get the results I desire from it without fully "knowing" everything about it. I encounter the kiln through the sensual object.

Objects, according to Harman, are deeper than any relation to them. A real object withdraws (is withdrawn already), and is not available to be fully known.

¹⁰⁶ It is through the sensual object (what I come with to the kiln) that the real object (kiln) can be related to. A real object, like a tree or a kiln, lies beyond

¹⁰⁶ In this way an object cannot be said to be touched, even in part by another object except through the sensual object. Harman writes that the question arises: 'why exaggerate and say things cannot touch at all?' (Harman, 2010, p.73). Harman answers, 'The problem is that objects cannot be touched "in part" because there is a sense in which objects have no parts' (p.73). Objects are unified. Touching a part of an object has implications for the unification of an object posing the problem of how the parts touch the object itself.

access; it cannot be completely realized. It is the fleeting qualities of the kiln—the sun glinting off the shiny silver metal skin, the clay splattered on one side, the sound of the kiln cooling—the things about the kiln that do not matter to what the kiln is structured to perform, or why I need it as part of my practice exactly, that are also encountered through the sensual object and inform me. Furthermore, although these qualities change as I walk around the kiln, I have no doubt it is the same kiln. ‘The sensual qualities are stripped from their sensual overlord and appear to orbit a withdrawn real object’ (p.103). The way the sun reflects off the metal of the kiln is something I perceive, not part of the kiln. These qualities shift as I walk around it, and can also change with what I know, or find out as well. Harman uses the example of a tree that we discover to be a gallows (2010, p.103), and even less conceptually, walking around what I assumed was a statue of a wrestling Satyr and Nymph, at the Ashmolean Museum, (Figures 68 and 69), I find I was wrong about both Satyr and Nymph. The Satyr did not have goat legs and the Nymph does have a penis. I could not see the whole statue at once, my experience changed as I investigated the statue from altered perspectives, but the statue has not. This is that aspect of statues that forces us to consider it over time from a multiplicity of viewpoints. With each shift our perception or our encounter is altered and amended, while the object itself has not altered.

Harman calls the way objects are able to seduce us with their qualities into considering them allure. He writes that ‘allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form’ (Harman, 2005, p.246). Statues, as objects shaped like

people, have an attraction for us. We can see ourselves, or our form in an altered state. We can ask of a statue *who is that* or *what is he doing*—questions not usually asked of objects that are not people (or animals). In this way statues draw us in with their qualities, which have alluring similarities to qualities we find in recognizing ourselves.

Assumptions and Qualities

The qualities (or our perceptions) of an object are not particularly informative about the real object we perceive. The statue of the Satyr and Nymph I encountered in Oxford is a carved lump of marble, which had little to do with my experience of the statue, and what I came away thinking about. Object Oriented Ontology suggests that we encounter the qualities, or images of objects and not the real object in its mysterious unity. Harman writes that if we accept this, and ‘If we identify this event with “aesthetics” in the broadest sense of the term, it becomes clear why first philosophy is aesthetics, not ethics’ (Harman, 2012, p.14/17). The qualities we encounter then are what Harman says constitute aesthetics, and OOO ‘treats aesthetics as our primary means of access to reality’ (Harman, 2016, p.11). The qualities of an object—such as the shiny kiln or the sameness of the doll heads—are the object’s allure, or aesthetic qualities, and the draw of these aesthetic features are emphasized in OOO. It is the object’s qualities that draw us in; a statue is a familiar form in an unusual and concretized context, the Victor Noir gisant specifically has a romantic and vulnerable shape and story. It has become connected to our desire for love and fruitfulness. The doll heads appeal as an aid to experience a

concern through the studio, as something potent and memorable. However, we still do not and cannot exhaust the object through our attraction to it. Or use of it.

The qualities of an object can be understood as allure through a visit to Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in Berlin. My daughter took pictures with the band One Direction, Marlene Dietrich, and Princess Leia from Star Wars. (Figure 70). She knew the figures were not real but she recognized the people though certain qualities. Again, Grosz writes in *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (2012), that Deleuze takes sensation to be 'what art forms from chaos through the extraction of qualities' (p.8). The qualities we recognize or the way we come to recognition through sensations, do not equal the person, but in this case did equal recognition of, for example, Harry Styles from One Direction. Harry Styles' cat¹⁰⁷ however probably would not recognize Harry in the One Direction group at Madame Tussaud's, as cats probably do not recognize us in the same way we recognize each other. Madame Tussaud's caters to qualities primary for us in recognition. The qualities that allow us to recognize Princess Leia are not vital to Princess Leia the character. Princess Leia, who is imaginary—and in this case is a wax dummy in Berlin in 2016 made to look like Carrie Fisher playing Princess Leia on the set of Star Wars in 1975—can have a different hairdo, wear pants, and grow old and still be

¹⁰⁷ Harry Styles was a band member of the now defunct group *One Direction*. Reportedly, his family cat is called Olivia. <http://www.m-magazine.com/posts/harry-styles-and-his-family-gets-a-new-cat-named-olivia-62049> I am suggesting that cats probably recognize people in some way other than facial features, such as smell, or sound, or movement.

Princess Leia in the Star Wars story. The qualities we recognize to be indicators of Princess Leia are not vital to even the imaginary character, but are part of the allure important in the sensual object through which we encounter Princess Leia.

Harman explains that allure is a particular and sporadic 'experience in which the intimate bond between a thing's unity and its plurality of notes somehow partially disintegrates' (Harman, 2005, p.143). This explains Harman 'happens in artworks of every sort' (2010, p.104). We are drawn in by qualities that we confront, without knowing the withdrawn, real object. When we assume our perception defines or exhausts the real object, or statue, we encounter, forgetting the unknown, unencountered unity of the real object beneath, we make a fundamental mistake. It is here we can begin to understand how the duality of our encounter with statues may be a vital method for considering how we approach objects generally. To misunderstand and define the allure of statues as the draw of a lesser copy of ourselves, fundamentally fails to consider the real object that is a statue. Further, the impossibility of a statue being anything but similar only in some surface allure or insubstantial way to what we are and do is also discounted. Statues are something other than what we are, and—although, they do have some superficial similarities to us—they are a vital resource for exposing our methods of considering this point.

Metaphor and The Encounter

If metaphor can shed any light on the communication between the different poles of being, then it may provide a kind of skeleton

key to unlock the other relations in the heart of the world'
(Harman, 2005, p.98).

Metaphor, writes Harman, 'plays out solely on the level of representation rather than that of the things themselves' (Harman, 2005, p.98). Metaphor is in the encounter. Metaphor corroborates and is an effective conception of the contact between things and ways in which new objects can manifest. Metaphor, Harman points out through philosopher Ortega y Gasset, is not reciprocal.¹⁰⁸ A metaphor is not a comparison of one thing to another nor is it substitution of one thing for another.¹⁰⁹ Metaphor changes how we understand. To say a *blanket of stars* shifts the night sky to something perhaps, warm and safe. The qualities of a blanket become, for an instant, attached to the night sky, entwining blanket qualities with a clear night sky, creating a new kind of 'vaporous hybrid of both: one that cannot even be described in terms of definite tangible properties' (Harman, 2005, p.107). Similarly, in one version of the fairy tale, *The Tinderbox*, the dog that guards the silver has eyes as big as dinner plates. While this is a linguistic simile, thinking about this dog is a curious experience. This is clearly not a dog of our regular experience, and it is certainly watching what we do. A statue of a dog or person with eyes as big as dinner plates would not have the same result.

¹⁰⁸ See (Harman, 2005, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things*, pp. 107, 207-208)

¹⁰⁹ Harman writes that 'Metaphor, humor, and several other types of experiences are all seen to belong under the more general heading of allure. Allure differs from normal perception by somehow putting the relation of the two moments of the thing at issue for us, by openly severing a thing from its qualities' (Harman, 2005, pp.5). Allure is what draws us in aesthetically.

Because it is difficult to picture, it brings to the front an important concept, 'metaphor seems to work only when it utilizes inessential qualities' (Harman, 2005, p.105) writes Harman. If one object is compared to a similar object, like a blanket and a sheet, or a plate and a platter, there isn't the same resistance to the connection. Harman quotes Ortega y Gasset writing about the function of metaphor, when it works with *inessential* qualities.

The result . . . is the annihilation of what both objects are as practical images. When they collide with one another their hard carapaces crack and the internal matter, in a molten state, acquires the softness of plasma, ready to receive a new form and structure. (Harman, 2005, p.107) (Ortega y Gasset, 1975, p.143)

Through metaphor, the real object is alluded to through its usually 'inessential qualities' (2005, p.105) (like the shininess of the kiln) and can join with another object through that surface allure. That I can understand a *blanket of stars* makes no sense, as blanket and stars have nothing to do with each other, except when deepened through metaphor. That the dog guarding the silver is not only a frightening guard dog, but also has eyes so large it is impossible to imagine or to illustrate, makes it clear it is an incomprehensible and inconceivable peril.

Metaphor is also created through statues, and without words. This is demonstrated (albeit in this case, with images of statues), in the study where balloons were placed onto pictures of statues. Showing images of naked female

statues to people while they held a balloon did not draw attention to the balloon at all, however the balloons placed on photographs of naked female statues did alter the balloons to the degree that the balloons were no longer comfortable to hold. It was not the real object being held that was considered clearly, because no change to that real object had occurred. The change happened in the sensual object, suggesting a transformation of that object through placement, a visual metaphor. We have been affected, as per Brennan (2004), and altered by the encounter. This is a further indication of the power of the sensual object, and that this is where we are most accountable.

In summary, Harman's argues that 'any relation immediately generates a new object' (Harman, 2010, p.117) and that this is the sensual object—which is the form of contact between things—because the real object cannot be known, we know about real objects only in a kind of translation. The encounter is not a transitive relation. This claims Harman is 'hardcore realism because it takes real objects so seriously that it holds them to be irreplaceable by any conceptual model' (Harman, 2011, p.10/11). The Woodsman, as a unified object, can become tin, survive the shift, cause a shift in my conception of objects and be imaginary and a real object. There is in this a characteristic of the encounter with art that follows here that is vital, but subtle. We have encountered person shaped objects—such as mannequins, dolls and probably statues— without considering the experience from an altered perspective. When we are willing and able to consider these objects differently, we are offered insights about the quality and the limitations of our perception and our

assumptions. It is when encountering a statue as an art object, which is charged differently than everyday objects, that we are offered an opportunity to alter our perspective through a greater consideration of the sensual object we are a part of.

‘The reality of a thing is always utterly different from any of our relations to it’ (Harman, 2005, p.103). This was illustrated to me vividly by watching the GoPro video of myself in the studio. Recognizing that there is always more to any object we encounter is, in itself, overwhelming. However, the unknowable, unified object that is mediated by the sensual object is in relation to the perceiver, and offers an opportunity to consider how much assumption, or disinterest will come with us into the sensual object and therefore the encounter with statues. To reiterate, the sensual object is not located in our mind specifically, we are on the interior of the sensual object¹¹⁰, we are part of the sensual object, which is a further drawback to our unobstructed perception of our own encounters. Again, this has been demonstrated by my experience of the studio. I designed the studio, I am the skilled “labourer,” I generate the work in the studio and yet I do not have a clear, lucidly observed understanding of events and actions there. Harman points out that ‘introspection is no more exhaustive than knowledge gained from the outside’ (p.73). I am part of the larger object of my studio and this object is not exhaustible through my having created it. Harman writes,

¹¹⁰ This argument can be found in chapter 8 of *Quadruple Object*, (Harman, 2010)

For notice that our relation with an entity can itself become a unified object that withdraws from the scrutiny of all other entities, including we ourselves: as when we form marriages and business partnerships, or join the Foreign Legion. The implications of these links are by no means fully accessible to their participants (Harman, 2010, p.113).

All objects are trapped in this limited perspective. This is the nature of relations. In the same way we are not able to fully exhaust partnerships or understand marriages completely from within them, fire does not consume all of the aspects or qualities of cotton or translate the aspects of cotton important to other objects.

Harman says that 'art isn't trying to explain what [an object] is made of or what it does' (2015, @12:47), and 'artists do not provide a theory of physical reality' (2012, p.14). Artists are not focused on replacing an object with knowledge about it and merely duplicating or copying an object would allow for nothing different than everyday things. Instead, writes Harman in his *Documenta* article, *The Third Table*, (2012) in art 'there is an attempt to establish objects deeper than the features through which they are announced, or allude to objects that cannot quite be made present' (p.14). Statues also achieve this on several levels; i.e. we encounter Pluto capturing Proserpina, or the body of the long dead Victor Noir or Shelley. These are not everyday things.

Situating and Contextualizing Statues

Statues, as discussed in the introduction and Chapter One have a tentative position in Contemporary Art. However, statues are comfortably situated as art objects through Harman's essay, *The Third Table* (2012), and realistically contextualized in an interpretation of Arthur Danto's new *Art* era. Harman's essay begins by defining the two tables of Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington.¹¹¹ The two tables are duplicates, says Eddington, of the table of 'everyday life, at which he sits to write, and the same table as described by physics' (Harman, 2012, p.5). There is the familiar table he uses, and the table described by science, made of atoms or particles. These two tables align with the concept of the two cultures, the sciences and the humanities, as put forward by scientist and writer C. P. Snow in 1959. Harman writes that 'the scientist reduces the table downward to tiny particles invisible to the eye; the humanist reduces it upward to a series of effects on people and other things' (Harman, 2012, p.6). The object, the real table, is neither of those tables alone, argues Harman. An object is not only the tiny particles it is made of, in this the object is undermined, nor is it only a part of a whole, the object is overmined (as previously defined in this chapter). An object is a third thing, it is both the table of the humanities and the table of science and the mysterious unity of the object itself. If Eddington's two tables provide the moral support for Snow's two cultures (Harman, 2012, p.7), one of the Humanities and one of Science, then Harman argues that his table requires a third culture.

¹¹¹ Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington was an astrophysicist, who famously confirmed Einstein's general relativity. In his 1927 Gifford lectures he spoke about two tables, that table of the everyday experience and the table of science.

Harman suggests the arts as the third culture. He describes the philosophy of the third table as one that 'is committed to tables that do exist at a deeper than all possible transformations, modifications, perturbations, or creations' (Harman, 2012, p.13). This culture is more than the one of the enlightened natural scientist, who, in effect would blend only the two tables that Eddington proposed. In this mixture, the unified object is still missing. Artists, suggests Harman, 'do not provide a theory of physical reality (p.14). Art is not science. Artists do not seek the first table, the everyday table, because 'art is not just replication' (p.14). Instead, writes Harman, art and artists 'attempt to establish objects deeper than the features through which they are announced, or allude to objects that cannot quite be made present' (Harman, 2012, p.14).

Statues quietly do this quite well. Hercules, or the Tin Woodsman, Jesus, or David can be present with us, and Giacometti's figures are read as 'us,' although the forms would never physically, medically or anatomically work as a living person. Abstracting the body, altering it from an exact copy of ourselves, seems to enliven it. We find empathy with the *Pieta* and it is natural and unchallenged to speak of stone as flesh, although we know it is illusion.

Harman, speaking about philosopher Manuel Delanda's¹¹² discussion of human society as something apart from humans, considers that 'humans are necessary ingredients of society but it does not follow that humans have transparent

¹¹² *A New Philosophy Of Society*, 2006

knowledge of that society' (2015, @21:00). Just as I am a necessary ingredient of my studio but do not have transparent knowledge of my studio practice, Harman proposes that art is a human activity for humans, but from that perspective we do not have transparent knowledge about it. Statues offer us a specific form of encounter that puts forward our relations with others and objects generally for inspection.

I suggest that statues are art objects that connect and resonate with Object Oriented Ontology and similarly, OOO provides concepts to better comprehend both the encounter and statues. Statues are openly about us, made by and for us, but are not us, not human. Statues are objects that put our relations with objects on display. Our encounters with statues reveal much about our encounters with the world, and reveal our concretized concepts and ideas with which we approach the world.

CONCLUSION

The authority from which this study has been conducted comes directly from practice. The employment and study of the figure and the continued use of materials to do so is the foundation and origin of this research, and is where all concepts and comprehension engaged during this study were corroborated and confirmed. Again, as Kathrin Busch puts forward as definition number six of outcome for artistic research, art ‘can thus reveal the concealed, flipside of knowledge’ (Busch, 2009, p.4), which positions art as able to point to what is obscured or concealed by the structure of other forms of knowledge. I contend that this revealing of the flipside, or the revealing of assumptions, is what this study has aimed to achieve. Statues therefore, the physical result of practice, are positioned as a means through which concepts can be both considered and provoked, revealing what is frequently masked or veiled.

Assumptions and Contributions

Again, our encounters with statues— objects shaped like people, made by and for people, but are not people— put our relations with objects on display, revealing some of how we might conceive of our encounter generally with the world. Grosz argues that concepts are how we are able to deal with life. Although she further points out that concepts do not solve problems. Gravity, living with other people, and mortality are not problems solved with concepts,

but engaged and addressed through concepts (Grosz, 2010, @22:20). We know how to approach things from past experience or socialization. In short, the production of concepts is how we order life. How we approach life. In most cases, we need to have these assumptions in place,¹¹³ but being aware that we do, and mindful of our position as only a part of our relation with an object, is sometimes overlooked. Statues are positioned almost specifically to invite us to consider assumption we have about ourselves as people and objects.

Statues as objects resist or do not respond to an overmining or undermining consideration (as described by Harman) in any revealing way. A statue, when considered reduced—perhaps to the atoms it is made of—or as a piece of the whole that is the world, is lost as a focal point, all that is interesting about it as an object lost or misplaced, its purpose and point removed. It is when we consider the unified object that is a statue and review our curious summaries of that object that we begin to actually encounter a statue, and allow it to enhance our concepts or to reveal unidentified, or concealed assumptions about it.

Antonio Damasio begins *Self Comes To Mind* (2010) writing that this book was ‘written to start over’ (2010, p.6). Damasio asserts that, although he has been engaged in studying the human brain and mind for over thirty years, he is no longer satisfied with his former interpretation of the issue of consciousness. He

¹¹³ See Antonio Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind; Constructing the Conscious Brain* Pantheon, 2010, for an explanation of how shorthand in thinking, previous experience is useful.

writes that after looking again, at research old and new, in slightly different ways, he has come to alter his former thinking, principally on two problems: 'the origin and nature of feelings and the mechanisms behind the construction of the self' (p.7). His book, he claims is about 'what we still do not know but wish we did' (p.7). What Damasio has achieved through re-conceiving his former account of the problem of consciousness is to identify where the key problems are in the underlying framework. He has traded his former certainty, or knowledge, for knowing, or pointing to the assumptions at the base of his previous arguments.

Similarly, Alva Noë also addresses assumptions. He writes in *Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature* (2015) that 'neuroscience is straitjacketed, not by the methods of science, to be sure, but by unacknowledged philosophical assumptions, not so much by a theory as by an ideology about what we are' (p.120). That you are your brain, he continues, 'is not one of neuroscience's findings; it is rather a raft of assumptions that have been taken for granted by neuroscience from the start; it is Descartes's conception but given a materialist makeover (pp.120-21). Here, assumptions have been gleaned and exposed. The slight shift that comes with considering a non-anthropocentric world allows assumptions about human consciousness to be revealed. The point is not to remove humans as a focus, but to remove humans as the centre point of everything, blocking the view. We have seen that it is difficult to see ourselves in our relations, as the scene from Frayne's play *Copenhagen* describes. Statues are particularly well positioned as objects shaped like us to further provoke

consideration about how we encounter others, as the initial brief attention to Levinas in relation to statues denoted. Both Damasio and Noë, scientist and philosopher, suggest that by having realized and indicated assumptions in the foundations of structures made of otherwise sound scientific or philosophical knowledge, they have an approach to building more sound—albeit slightly altered—edifice, and are able to be enlarged beyond the previous arrangement.

Discovering assumptions is, by nature, an unusual occurrence. As discussed earlier, Harman uses the example of fire burning cotton as a means to characterize the difference between our relations with cotton and a flame's relation with cotton as a difference of degree of relation and not kind or type of relation. The flame relates to only some of the cotton's qualities, not all of the cotton's qualities. When we encounter a statue, we are in relation with qualities that may not be pertinent to fire, birds, the ground, or water. The ground relates to the material and weight of the statue, but probably not the human form, so too fire may burn up a statue, but the flame's warming or destruction of a ceramic figure is not the same as a flame's warming or destruction of us.¹¹⁴ Encountering a statue may become a prompt for us to recall that all objects have relations that differ only in degree but not in kind from the relations we experience. Reminded of our experience of statues as an object we are able to hold two opposing ideas about, or catching us unaware or even striking us as

¹¹⁴ My father had a knee replacement about ten years before he died. When he was cremated, the steel knee was charred but undamaged and now rests in a inconspicuous place in my living-room.

uncanny could perhaps assist in indicating or pointing to assumptions we carry into our own relations with other people and encounters with other objects.

Harman argues that when we are asked what something is, we can explain what it 'is made of, or what it does' (Harman, 2016, p.178) (or both). This allows for two kinds of knowledge, what something is made of or what it does. Harman writes that 'this is how we attain knowledge of the world' (p.178), however, he continues, 'it does not follow that knowledge exhausts the reality of the world, or that it is the only worthy means of gaining access to that world' (Harman, 2016, p.178). The two tables of Eddington represent the two options we have been offered for engaging objects and for engaging knowledge. In his essay, *The Third Table* (2012), Harman proposes a third table which 'is a genuine reality deeper than any theoretical or practical encounter with it' (2012, pp.9-10). This table gives way to a third culture, or a third attitude toward knowledge. Harman's option is more than an embrace of both scientific knowledge, and the common sense of everyday experience, it includes a third perspective, 'found neither in subatomic physics nor in human psychology' (p.10).

Harman's third table is an encounter with objects that I propose to be exemplified by our encounter with statues. To see a statue as only the material it is constructed from or as part of a system of art or statuary is not to perceive the figure (or point of, or art) in the object, although, the statue is not an

attempt to specifically replicate a person and is not human. Often when we direct the question *what is it?* to a statue, the object—the statue—disappears as we discuss either what it does, or what it is made of. Neither answer tells us much that is useful about a statue, or touches the object as this study has indicated. Therefore, the necessity of Harman’s third option, which includes the questions about what something is made of or does, but also, a ‘cognition that is not a kind of knowledge’ (Harman, 2017, @9:00), is made plain, especially if we are to speak comprehensively about statues. Harman says that the third table is ‘dealt with allusively, obliquely, elliptically’ (@9:10). It is not knowledge but knowing. The contribution of this study is an articulation of knowing or cognition about statues.

While it may seem to be a paradox to employ Object Oriented Ontology as a means to articulate what happens when we encounter statues, OOO has been a clarifying and expanding method. Statues, as art objects, demonstrate the third table of Harman’s third culture and exemplify an approach to thinking about the non-human. OOO’s position that our relations differ in degree but not in kind to the relations of all other objects offers parameters to the encounter, which enhances rather than diminishes what can be discovered and understood about human consciousness through the encounter with objects shaped like—but not actual—people.

I argue that through OOO statues can be seen or understood as material in the studio and as person-shaped objects in the world, which then broadens and conveys the character and boundaries of our (and other objects) encounters with them. I further contend it is in this articulation of objects and the encounter that we can begin to amend and modify our ideas or perceptions of what a statue as an object presents to us and reveals about us as people.

Elizabeth Grosz writes that art is the ‘regulation and organization’ (2012, p.4) of materials through restrictions (‘self-imposed’ by the artist), that ‘directly impact living bodies, organs, nervous systems’ (p.4). Grosz advances that ‘art enables matter to become expressive, to not just satisfy but also to intensify—to resonate and become more than itself’ (p.4). The statue, as a mysterious unified object, is more than the materials and more than the intention of the artist as this study suggests. It is both of those things and more, exemplified by Harman’s third table.

The answer to the question that has directed this study—what happens when we encounter a statue—is that a third object, the encounter, appears. It is in conceiving of this encounter as an object that holds concepts, perceptions, histories, assumptions, and ourselves, but differs from the object statue, that this study has consequence. As we encounter an object shaped like us, we have the occasion to consider the statue diffractively, or expansively, rather than through endless reflection. We encounter through our concepts, perceptions,

histories, assumptions, and ourselves the real and not real of ‘a three-dimensional figurative image [. . . that] both depicts a body in space and is a body-in-space’ (Getsy, 2014, p.2), or an object shaped like a person.

To achieve a diffractive approach to statues, there must be a willingness to ask about allowing them the same taboos we reserve for ourselves. We need to identify and ask why we can speak without self-consciousness about a veiled statue. Why do we dismiss statues and find them an anachronism partly because they remain still, “caught in a moment,” and do not live. There are very few other objects that can expose our buried assumptions in this way. Engaging the encounter has incorporated (but has not been limited to) consideration of mirror neurons, concepts of embodiment and mind, theories of affect and transmission, and the nature of materials as related to sculpture. Furthermore, the figure and our attitude toward it denote concepts that are ancient yet unresolved for us. We have assumptions buried in forms, such as in what monuments are and the purity of Greek figures. We are extremely familiar with the body, and yet to gain the skill to convincingly work with the form requires a conscious—historically considered dangerous or taboo—medical-like knowledge of the body that makes use of the structures and forms inside and unseen beneath the surface we consider body.

With a slight alteration of the concepts with which we approach a statue, an art object, we gain benefit from our encounter, and as Harman points out ‘We

define ourselves ethically by what we take seriously' (Harman, 2016, p.17). We reveal our assumptions, prejudices, and relations in the world through the encounter or third object, or as Levinas suggests, a third *other* in mind.

The shift is that when we encounter an object—a person, thing or statue—to conceive of it in the manner of the *third* table, to deal with it as an art object, allusively, obliquely, elliptically. Our encounter is not the statue, the object we encounter is experienced with our remembered history and anticipated future in mind. Recognizing that the philosophical invitation is there when we encounter statues is to experience statues with altered expectations. The benefit of that slight alteration of the concepts with which we encounter a statue, an art object, is that there is the possibility to reveal and discern part of our relation to the world, if not for furthering what is known about the world, then for the satisfaction of a more profound experience of statues.

The impact of this study on my practice has been an integration of my practice with theory and concepts established outside my practice, and to have a means to continue to do so. This has been realized by bringing my practice of making and considering statues into a measured dialog with theories and concepts particularly about the body and about objects. In this exchange it was initially clear to me where my comprehension of the concepts was broadened by practice and my practice extended by concepts, although I am less certain of this division now. My practice has been enlarged and harnessed to work with a

conceptual coherence it did not have before. This was achieved through best use of the methods employed for this study. This included making use of my practice—what I had at hand—as per Levi-Strauss (1966), a ‘trust’ that data has something to offer and that theory will emerge, as per Glaser (1992, p.21), from data, and through making use of diffraction, as per Barad (2007), which enlarged or abrogated the concepts I engaged toward discovering *what happens when we encounter a statue* and Schön’s consideration of reflection (1983). Previously in my practice, questions were generated but lingered, unresolved without methods for bringing theory and concepts from outside practice to bear on issues encountered in my practice. In short, the theory I engaged has made sense of my practice for me while my practice has also made the theory comprehensible, and therefore useful, to me.

More broadly, the primary contribution to knowledge this study makes is to indicate how statues are philosophical actants. This denotes my aim to have argued for statues, with the history of the form intact, as an art form suited for engaging and enhancing conceptual and philosophical thought. This study has proposed that our encounter with statues is able to subtly reveal ways of considering objects that has been obscured by other concepts. For example, investigating our encounter with statues has indicated that we often, as per F. Scott Fitzgerald, ‘hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time’ about the figure. For us the human form appears to predominate our reflection on an object. We condemn statues (iconoclasm) that might represent people or ideas we disagree with, and conversely adore or worship those that we do, and

further, we allow statues taboos we reserve for ourselves, such as difficulties with nudity. Through placing my encounters with statues through practice—as defined in the introduction—into dialog with Object Oriented Ontology, I both gained a basic understanding of OOO, and enlarged my comprehension and articulation of statues and the encounter. I consider that result to indicate that statues could be said to function as a philosophical actant.

Moving toward considering statues as this kind of actant would perhaps best be achieved by conceiving of the statue as a prompt. When statues disappoint us by remaining still, or cause us to feel uncomfortable in their nakedness, or strike us as uncanny, we could consider our ability to hold two opposing ideas about statues to assist in pointing to what is sometimes left unconsidered in our encounter with a statue. The encounter reveals assumptions we carry into our relations or encounters with them and with other objects.

Finally, while questions about statues and the encounter were always generated in my practice, it has been through applying the specific methods required by this study that it has become feasible to examine and address questions in practice. The methods of this study provided a specific approach, which once embraced and adhered to, comfortably situated particular aspects my practice—often ones I had been only tacitly aware of—as collectable data. In *The Slides Project* for example, where I considered work I had made and documented, when these specific methods were applied, contained an emergent theory that revealed issues in my current practice to me. The methods directed an approach to data that delayed conclusions and assessments, allowing for the expansion and negation of diffraction to occur.

Understanding a diffractive approach to data, which considers an expansion of concepts rather than a resituating of the same, has been easily adapted to and rigorously performed through Glaserian Grounded Theory in this study.

Glaser's direction to *trust* that data has something to offer, that theory will emerge, and that 'good grounded theory should be readily modifiable to new conditions, new subjects, and perspectives' (p.24) provided clear boundaries and delineated a specific attitude especially when describing the GT researcher as having 'the patience and security and trust to wait' (p.26) for theory to emerge from the data.

This approach fundamentally assumes the data itself has something to offer, which is perhaps why Object Oriented Ontology had an expanding influence in this study. Ultimately, it has been the methods I was able to employ in this study that allowed statues, and the object that is my practice, to inform and show them selves to me.

FIGURES



lisa osborn

Figure 1: *Bust of a Girl*, possibly by Clodion. (p. 23)



Figure 2 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 2: Marc Quinn (*Drawn From Life* 2017) (p. 34)

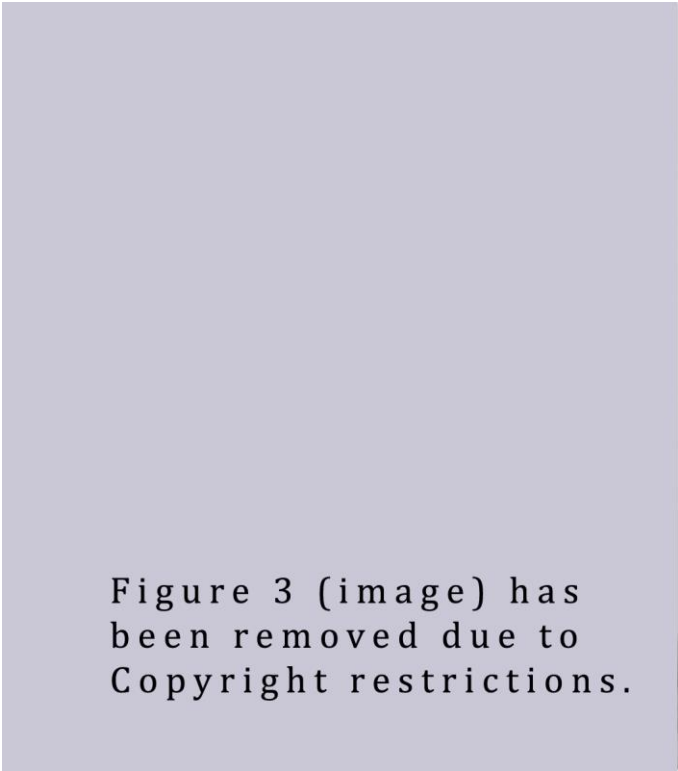


Figure 3 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 3: Ugo Rondinone (wax *Nudes* 2011) (p. 34)



David Coleman / Alamy Stock Photo

Figure 4: Bruce Nauman (*Fifteen Pairs of Hands*, 1996). (p. 34)

Figure 5: Yinka Shinobare MBE (RA) (*Scramble For Africa* 2003 or *How To Blow-Up Two Heads At Once* 2006). (p. 34)

Figure 5 (image etc.) has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.




Figure 6 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 6: Paul McCarthy (*That Girl* 2012-13). (p. 34)

Figure 7: John Miller (*Now We're Big Potatoes* 1992). (p. 34)



Figure 7(image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.




Figure 8 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 8: Paul Thek Working on the Tomb Figure: Photo by Peter Hujar (1976). (p. 35)

Figure 9:



Figure 9 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Part of a mural in the tomb of Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamen, who died in 1323, showing six of twelve baboons (Papio Hamadryas Anubis) with erect phalluses BCE. Each baboon is watching over one of the twelve hours the king would have to travel to the Afterlife.

Baboons (P. 69)



Figure 10: Rodin, *The Age Of Bronze* (1877). (p. 35)

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Figure 11 (image) has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 11: Pawel Althamer, *Monika and Pawel*, (2002). (p. 37)




Figure 12 (image) has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 12: Huma Bhabha, *The Orientalist* (2007). (p. 37)

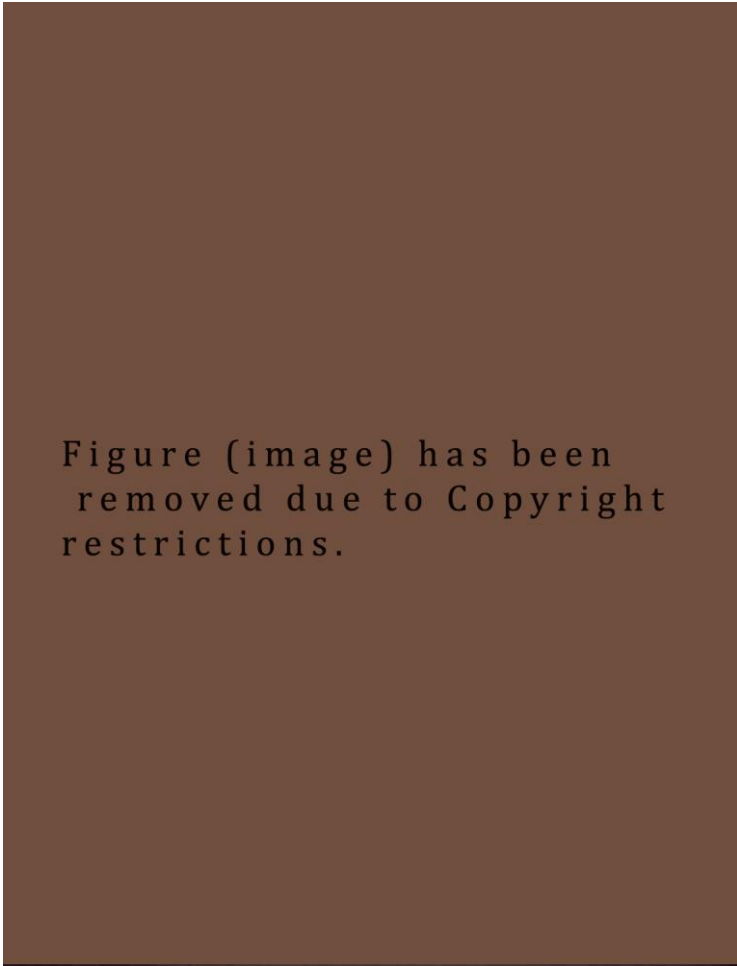


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removed due to Copyright
restrictions.

Figure 13: Paloma Varga Weisz's *Fallede Frau doppelköpfig* (2004). (p. 37)

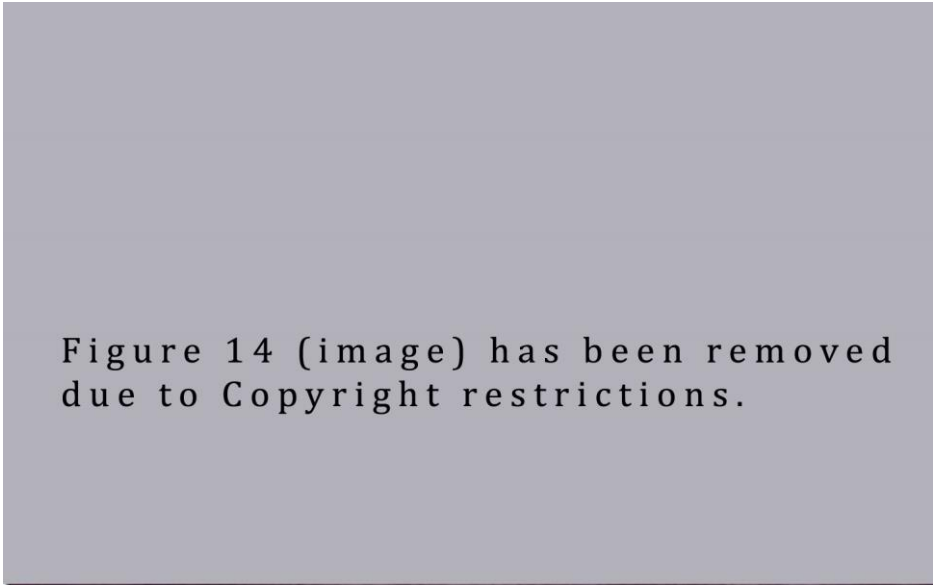


Figure 14 (image) has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 14: Rebbecca Warren's *She* (2003). (p. 37)

Figure 15 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 15: Aron Demetz *Advanced Minorities*, (detail) (2012). (p. 37)



Theresa Scarbrough / Alamy Stock Photo

Figure 16: *Victor Noir gisant*, (1891), by Aimé-Jules Dalou, Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris. (p. 71)

Figure 17: postcard of Victor Noir from Père Lachaise Cemetery, circa 1915. (p. 71)

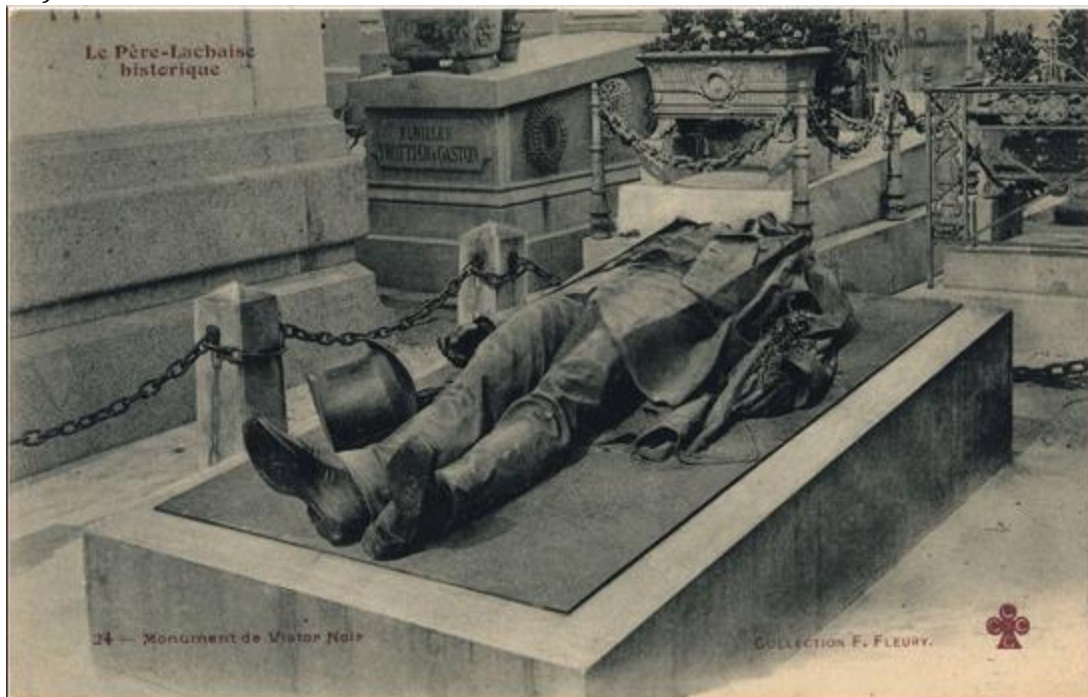


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Figure 18: (p. 80)

'In the ninety-first division of Paris's Per Lachaise cemetery, the tomb of August Blanqui shivers with an undercurrent of angst-riddled vigor' (Eschelbacher, 2016, p.299).



Figure 20: Gisant of the poet *SHELLEY* (1893) BY Edward Onslow Ford. (P. 84)

Figure 21: Balloon. (p. 88)



'I then handed around a bag of balloons and asked the participant(s) to take one, and everyone was asked to say what it was: An *un-blown-up balloon*, was the most common answer.'



Figure 22: *I then showed the same series of pictures with a balloon Photoshopped onto it. (p. 88)*



Figure23: *Standing Woman*, Gaston Lachaise, 1932 UCLA campus. (p. 88)

Figure24: Gustave Courbet, *L'Origine du monde*, 1877, (with balloon). (p. 88)



Figure25 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure25: Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Zygotic Acceleration, Biogenetic, De-Sublimated Libidinal Model (enlarged x 1000)* (1995). (p. 89)

Figure 28 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 28: Bernini, *The Rape Of Proserpina*, (Detail), (1622). (p. 105)



vittorio sciosia / Alamy Stock Photo

Figure 29: Antonio Corradini, *Veiled Truth* (1752). (p. 115)



age fotostock / Alamy Stock Photo

Figure 30: Antonio Corradini and Giuseppe Sanmartino, *Veiled Truth* (1752), and *Veiled Christ* (1753), respectively. (p.115)



Peter Barritt / Alamy Stock Photo

Figure 31: Michelangelo, *Pieta* (1499). (p. 115)

Figure 32: Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, (1965). (p. 116)

El Chapulin / Alamy Stock Photo





Figure 33 (image) has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 33: Giacometti working on the plaster for *Walking Man*. (p. 164)

Figure 34: Traces of his sculpting with plaster. (p164)

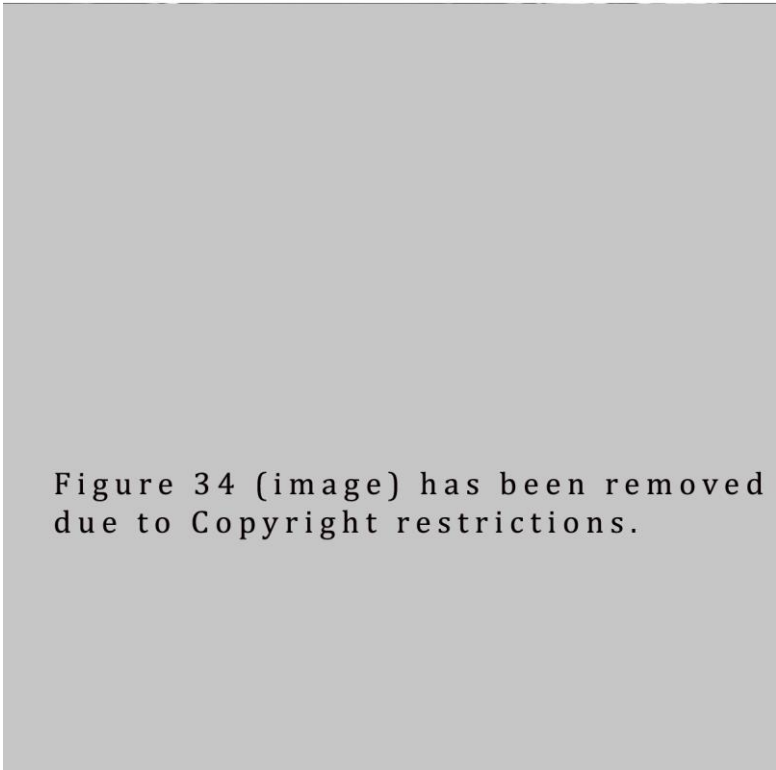


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(Both photos from Ernst Scheidegger Archive: Photograph by Ernst Scheidegger © 2018 Stiftung Ernst Scheidegger-Archiv, Zurich.)



Figure 68: Statue in the plaster cast room at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
(p 204)



Figure 69: Alternate view.

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The plaster cast room at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (p 203)




Figure 70: Charlotte and Princess Leia.

Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, Berlin 2015. (p 205)

APPENDICES

i The Conversations Project documents

 <p>FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES Arts and Humanities Research Ethics Sub-committee APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF RESEARCH</p>		(For ArtRESC use only) Application No:	
		Chairs action (expedited)	Yes/ No
		Risk level -if high refer to UREC chair immediately Cont. Review Date	High/ low / /
		Outcome (delete as necessary)	Approved/ Declined/ Amend/ Withdrawn
ALL PARTS OF THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL IN ORDER TO GAIN APPROVAL. Please refer to the guidance notes.			
1.	Investigator <i>*Note 1</i> Lisa Osborn Contact Address: P.O. Box 39, Avery Island, LA 70513 Tel: +1 617 653-2279 E mail: LBOsborn@aol.com		
	If Student, please name your Director of Studies or Project Advisor: Michael Bowdidge Course/programme: Mphil/PhD School: Transart Institute		
2.	Title of research: <i>Exploring abstraction and affect in the making and experiencing of figurative sculpture</i>		
3.	Nature of approval sought (Please tick relevant boxes) <i>*Note 2</i> a) PROJECT: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b) TAUGHT PROGRAMME (max. 3 years): <input type="checkbox"/> If a,) please indicate which category: Funded/unfunded Research (staff) <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> MPhil/PhD, ResM, BClin Sci, EdD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Or Other (please state) <input type="checkbox"/> Taught Masters <input type="checkbox"/>		
4.	a) Funding body (if any): b) If funded, please state any ethical implications of the source of funding, including any reputational risks for the university and how they have been addressed. <i>*Note 3</i>		
5.	a) Duration of project/programme: <i>*Note 4</i> b) Dates: 11/14 -10/17		
6.	Has this project received ethical approval from another Ethics Committee? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a) Committee name: b) Are you therefore only applying for Chair's action now? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
7.	Attachments (if required): a) Application/Clearance (if you answered Yes to question 6) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b) Information sheets for participants Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> c) Consent forms Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> d) Sample questionnaire(s) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> e) Sample set(s) of interview questions Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> f) Continuing review approval (if requested) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> g) Other, please state:		

**1. Principal Investigators are responsible for ensuring that all staff employed on projects (including research assistants, technicians and clerical staff) act in accordance with the University's ethical principles, the design of the research described in this proposal and any conditions attached to its approval.*

**2. In most cases, approval should be sought individually for each project. Programme approval is granted for research which comprises an ongoing set of studies or investigations utilising the same methods and methodology and where the precise number and timing of such studies cannot be specified in advance. Such approval is normally appropriate only for ongoing, and typically unfunded, scholarly research activity.*

**3. If there is a difference in ethical standards between the University's policy and those of the relevant professional body or research sponsor, Committees shall apply whichever is considered the highest standard of ethical practice.*

**4. Approval is granted for the duration of projects or for a maximum of three years in the case of programmes. Further approval is necessary for any extension of programmes.*

8.	<p>If you are staff, are there any other researchers involved in your project? Please list who they are, their roles on the project and if/how they are associated with the University. Please include their email addresses.</p>
	<p>If you are a student, who are your other supervisors?</p> <p>Sarah Bennett</p> <p>Have you discussed all ethical aspects of your research with your DoS prior to submitting this application? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
9.	<p>When do you need/expect to begin the research methods for which ethical approval is sought?</p> <p>November 2014 or upon approval.</p> <p>How long will this research take and/or for how long are you applying for this ethical approval? *</p> <p>Through October 2017</p>
10.	<p>Please provide a 200 word description of the project.</p> <p>This project will attempt to explore abstraction and affect in the making and experiencing of the sculptural body. The focus is on the role of abstraction in moving the figure from an aesthetic object to a philosophical agent in contemporary sculpture and the role of affect and its attendant theories in the transmission cycle between the living and sculptural body.</p> <p>The investigation will concentrate on how knowledge gained in a studio practice based on figure sculpture can be both exposed in a coherent and commutable form, and influenced by particular discoveries in neurobiology, and thinking in neurophilosophy and affect theory. In revealing how that knowledge is gained and imparted coherently, the possibility of the figure being used both as an agent in contemporary art and as an object of contemporary theoretical discourse arises.</p> <p>This project is constructed to unfold as cycles of studio work on historically based abstractions in figurative sculptural form, which, in turn will be informed by theories of visceral affect and embodiment, neurophilosophy and neuroscience, and data collection through grounded theory data analysis.</p>
11.	<p>Please describe all methods and procedures which involve human participants in this project (You should specify subject populations and recruitment method, etc.):</p> <p><i>Note: If you have indicated that you are using questionnaires or semi-structured interviews,</i></p>

<p><i>etc. you are expected to attach indicative samples to this application.</i></p> <p>In order to collect data about abstraction in the sculptural figure and what is conveyed to both makers and viewers, I will use traditional research methods including focus groups, in-depth interviews. The focus is on what altered anatomy imparts to a viewer and what is understood by and felt from the figure sculpture and how those decisions may be arrived at by makers.</p> <p>The focus groups will be made up of 3-5 participants. Both groups will be primarily recruited from the 2 universities in the area, (Louisiana State University and University of Louisiana at Lafayette) and visitors to and professionals at the Acadiana Center For the Arts. Recruitment will primarily involve informal networking in these communities and other artist groups. The purpose of the Focus groups is to generate ideas, subjects, and direction for later in-depth interviews. Both group 1 and 2 discussions will be prompted by general initial questions about experiencing the sculptural body. Group 2 will further be asked about how altering the figure occurs in the studio and how and when those decisions are made.</p> <p>The focus groups will be selected from 2 populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: Anyone 18 years old or older who has experienced figurative sculpture and would like to discuss that experience. This group will be drawn from the 2 universities in the area, (Louisiana State University and University of Louisiana at Lafayette) and visitors to and professionals at the Acadiana Center For the Arts. • Group 2; Anyone 18 years old or older who has made life size figures and would like to discuss that experience (artists). This group will be drawn from the 2 universities in the area, (Louisiana State University and University of Louisiana at Lafayette) and professionals at the Acadiana Center For the Arts. <p>The proposed focus group agenda will include:</p> <p>An audio recording of the focus group discussions will be made and general notes taken down from the recordings about topics of interest to group 1 and group 2. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form (Example attached).</p> <p>Data from these focus groups will be used in summary form to provide base line data on what is conveyed by abstraction in the sculptural body. This data will be further researched through in-depth interviews and secondary sources.</p> <p>The participants for the in-depth interviews will be sought through Universities, art centres and colleagues. The individual interviews will be audio recorded. Notes will be taken from the recordings for use in research for this project. If identifying information is on the recording for some reason, this information will be struck prior to archiving unless participant would like to be credited. If this is the case arrangements will be made to include agreed on visual evidence. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form (Example attached).</p> <p>Throughout, all participants will be asked to sign a consent form, reminded that no libellous or defamatory statements may be made about third parties, nor may sensitive or confidential information be disclosed about third parties and that this may result in the closure or partial closure of the interview and information being struck from recordings and transcripts; At the end of the interview the interviewee will be:</p> <p>Reminded again of the arrangements made for the custody and preservation of the interview and accompanying material, both immediately and in the future, and of any use to which the interview is likely to be put.</p> <p>Asked if he or she requires any restrictions on the use or availability of their interview at the time or in the future.</p>
--

	<p>Be reminded that contributions can be anonymised, if desired, for up to two months after the interview takes place.</p> <p>Be reminded that the desired outcome is to inform a PhD thesis, journal articles or conference papers based thereon.</p> <p>Participants will have access to transcripts from the recordings in which he/she participated by requesting this of the researcher for 2 months after the interview.</p>																											
12.	<p>Please answer either YES or NO to ALL questions below by placing an X in relevant box.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Do any of your research methods include research:</th><th>YES</th><th>NO</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>With vulnerable groups – for example, children and young people, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship?</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr> <tr> <td>With vulnerable groups – for example, children and young people, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship?</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr> <tr> <td>That involves sensitive topics – for example, participants' sexual behaviour, their illegal or political behaviour, their experience of violence, their abuse or exploitation, their mental health, or their gender or ethnic status?</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr> <tr> <td>With groups where permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access to members – for example, ethnic or cultural groups, native peoples or indigenous communities?</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr> <tr> <td>That involves deception or which is conducted without participants' full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out?</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr> <tr> <td>That involves access to records of personal or confidential information, including genetic or other biological information, concerning identifiable individuals?</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr> <tr> <td>That may induce psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or cause more than minimal pain?</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr> <tr> <td>That involves intrusive interventions – for example, the administration of drugs or other substances, vigorous physical exercise, or techniques such as hypnotherapy (i.e. interventions that your participants would not normally encounter, or which may cause them to reveal information which causes concern, in the course of their everyday life)?</td><td></td><td>X</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please provide further details of these potentially ethically sensitive aspects of your research.</p>	Do any of your research methods include research:	YES	NO	With vulnerable groups – for example, children and young people, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship?		X	With vulnerable groups – for example, children and young people, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship?		X	That involves sensitive topics – for example, participants' sexual behaviour, their illegal or political behaviour, their experience of violence, their abuse or exploitation, their mental health, or their gender or ethnic status?		X	With groups where permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access to members – for example, ethnic or cultural groups, native peoples or indigenous communities?		X	That involves deception or which is conducted without participants' full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out?		X	That involves access to records of personal or confidential information, including genetic or other biological information, concerning identifiable individuals?		X	That may induce psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or cause more than minimal pain?		X	That involves intrusive interventions – for example, the administration of drugs or other substances, vigorous physical exercise, or techniques such as hypnotherapy (i.e. interventions that your participants would not normally encounter, or which may cause them to reveal information which causes concern, in the course of their everyday life)?		X
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13.	<p>Ethical Protocol:</p> <p>Please write an ethical protocol using the following the headings: a) Informed Consent; b) Openness and Honesty; c) Right to Withdraw; d) Protection from Harm; e) Debriefing; f) Confidentiality; g) Professional Bodies whose ethical policies apply to this research.</p> <p>You must include a statement under each heading, indicating how you will ensure this research addresses each clause of Plymouth University's Principles for Research Involving Human Participants. (Please note that your application will be returned to you if you have not done so, thus holding up the approval process).</p> <p>If you have indicated that you will be using Information Sheets or Consent Forms, etc. you must attach an indicative draft version to this application and complete Question 7 accordingly.</p> <p><i>Please refer to Guidance Notes when completing this section.</i></p>																											

	<p>(Please also see attached "Consent Form For Participation in a Research Study".)</p> <p>Ethical protocol:</p> <p>a) Informed Consent; All participants will be informed that the investigator is involved in a project addressing the figure in sculpture, that the discussions will inform that project as a form of data collection and that the desired outcome is to inform a PhD thesis, journal articles or conference papers partially based on analysis of data collected. This research will be conducted in accordance with Plymouth University's ethical policy. No discussions will be continued if or when participant is unwilling. (Consent form is attached)</p> <p>b) Openness and Honesty; All participants must be 18 years old or older and will be informed that a project investigating the figure in sculpture is the motivation for initiating the Focus groups and the in-depth interviews. The findings will inform a PhD thesis, journal articles or conference papers based thereon.</p> <p>c) Right to Withdraw; Participants may withdraw from this study at any time up to 2 months after the focus group/interview takes place. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind for not participating or withdrawal. Participants have no obligation to participate.</p> <p>d) Protection from Harm; Every effort will be made to avoid harm of any kind, including pressing discussion that appears uncomfortable for a participant. Participants have no obligation to participate.</p> <p>e) Debriefing; Participants will be invited to sum up the conversation and/or review the interview or discussion if desired, reminded that the desired outcome of the interview or discussion is to inform a PhD thesis, journal articles or conference papers partially based on analysis of data collected, and provided with a way to contact the investigator.</p> <p>f) Confidentiality; No personal information will be collected other than the participant's name on the consent form. The participant will be given a number and a group identification. This will be stored in a secure, password protected location and destroyed after 10 years. Interview/discussion recordings and notes will not be kept in the same location or method as the consent forms. Participants will be anonymised in the thesis and/or publications unless identification is requested and expressly indicated in writing by participant. Participants will have access to notes taken from recording for up to 2 months after the interview.</p> <p>g) Professional Bodies whose ethical policies apply to this research. Reference to Oral History Society guidelines</p>																		
14.	<p>Declarations:</p> <p>For all applicants, your signature below indicates that, to the best of your knowledge and belief, this research conforms to the ethical principles laid down by Plymouth University and by the professional body specified in 6 (g).</p> <p>For supervisors of PGR students: As Director of Studies, your signature confirms that you believe this project is methodologically sound and conforms to university ethical procedures.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Name(s)</th> <th>Signature (electronic is acceptable)</th> <th>Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Applicant</td> <td>Lisa Osborn</td> <td>Lisa B Osborn</td> <td>8 October 2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Staff Investigators</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Director of Studies (if applicant is a postgraduate research student):</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Name(s)	Signature (electronic is acceptable)	Date	Applicant	Lisa Osborn	Lisa B Osborn	8 October 2014	Other Staff Investigators				Director of Studies (if applicant is a postgraduate research student):			
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Other Staff Investigators																			
Director of Studies (if applicant is a postgraduate research student):																			

Outcome of Application for Ethical Approval of Research

Applicant's Name:	Lisa Osborn
Staff or Student:	Student
Title of Research Project:	Exploring abstraction and affect in the making and experiencing of figurative sculpture
Date of Faculty of Research Ethics Committee Meeting	22 October 2014
Faculty Research Ethics Committee Decision:	APPROVED
Notes:	

CODE LISTS For Conversation Project

Coding for interviews:

Personal Story- Related to the statue itself- PSSI U

Personal Story- Metaphor for something in life- PSM U

Response to direct question =no but then speaks about statue as if alive- NoBut R
~~similar variation on this~~

Statue of David- DAVID U

Particular statues mentioned besides David- BeDa U
~~or first mentioned in a statue~~

Artist's Intentions mentioned- AI

Abstraction of the figure A

Reading particular emotions in a statue RE R

Importance of the face of the statue- eyes F R
 FE

Nudity of statues N R
 Not Good NNG

Statue as social issue SSI U

or Apotropaic
 A statue elicits a response one might have to a person- like arousal (objectifying the object) or love or friendly

Importance of context CTX U

Statues vs sculpture- mentioned SVSS

Statues are like mirrors SRMirror

Human scale or larger - mentioned at stat. y HUM SCA

Materials MAT

Uncanny Uncanny

Statues moving around at "night" SM@N

Human scale or larger - mentioned at stat. y
 Materials
 Uncanny
 Statues moving around at "night"

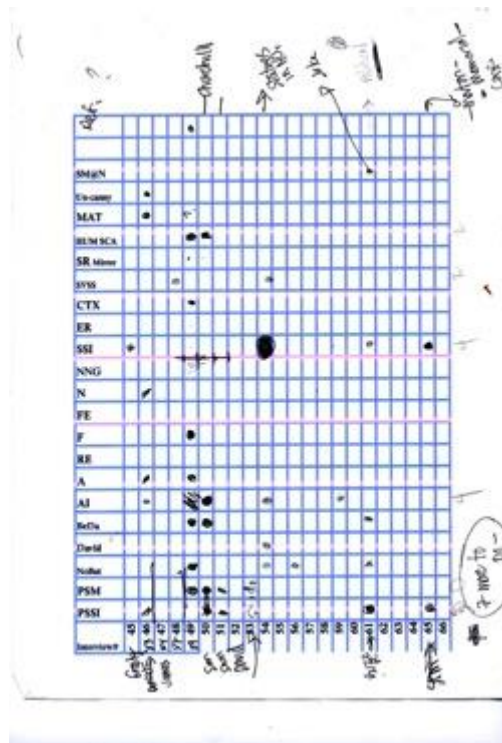
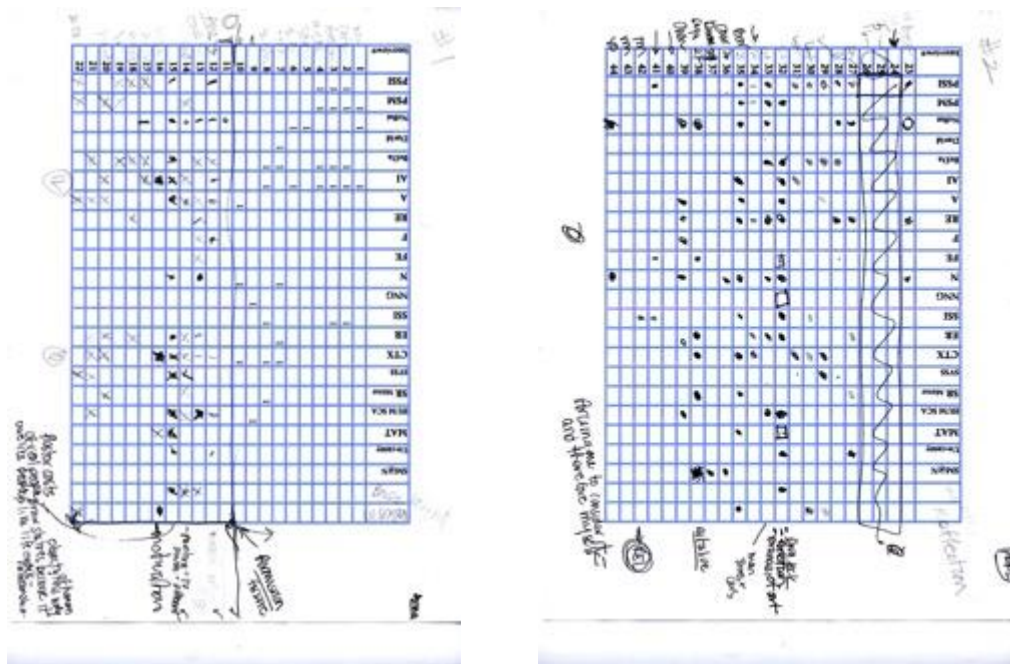
Bob Boby doll Barbie

R - reflection - cant see behind or in front of self

Statues are universal U
 Statues are real / not real R

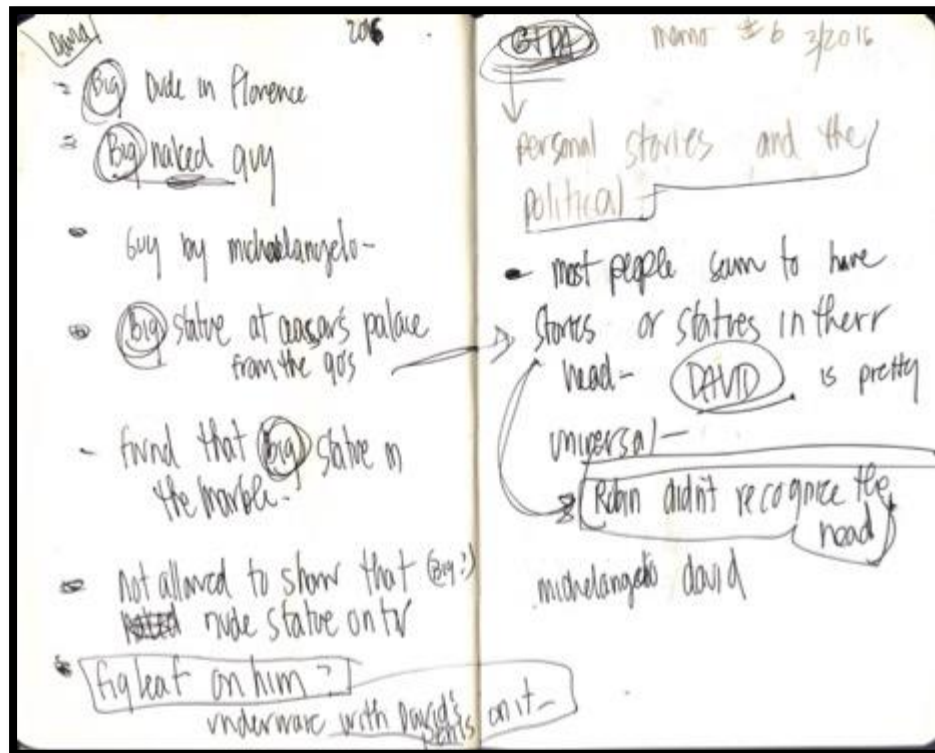
- Robt
 - Anne
 - Lisa Brown
 - Barry
 - Howard
 - Phillip
 - Elise
 - Char C
 - ...

Coding sheet examples for *The Conversations Project*:



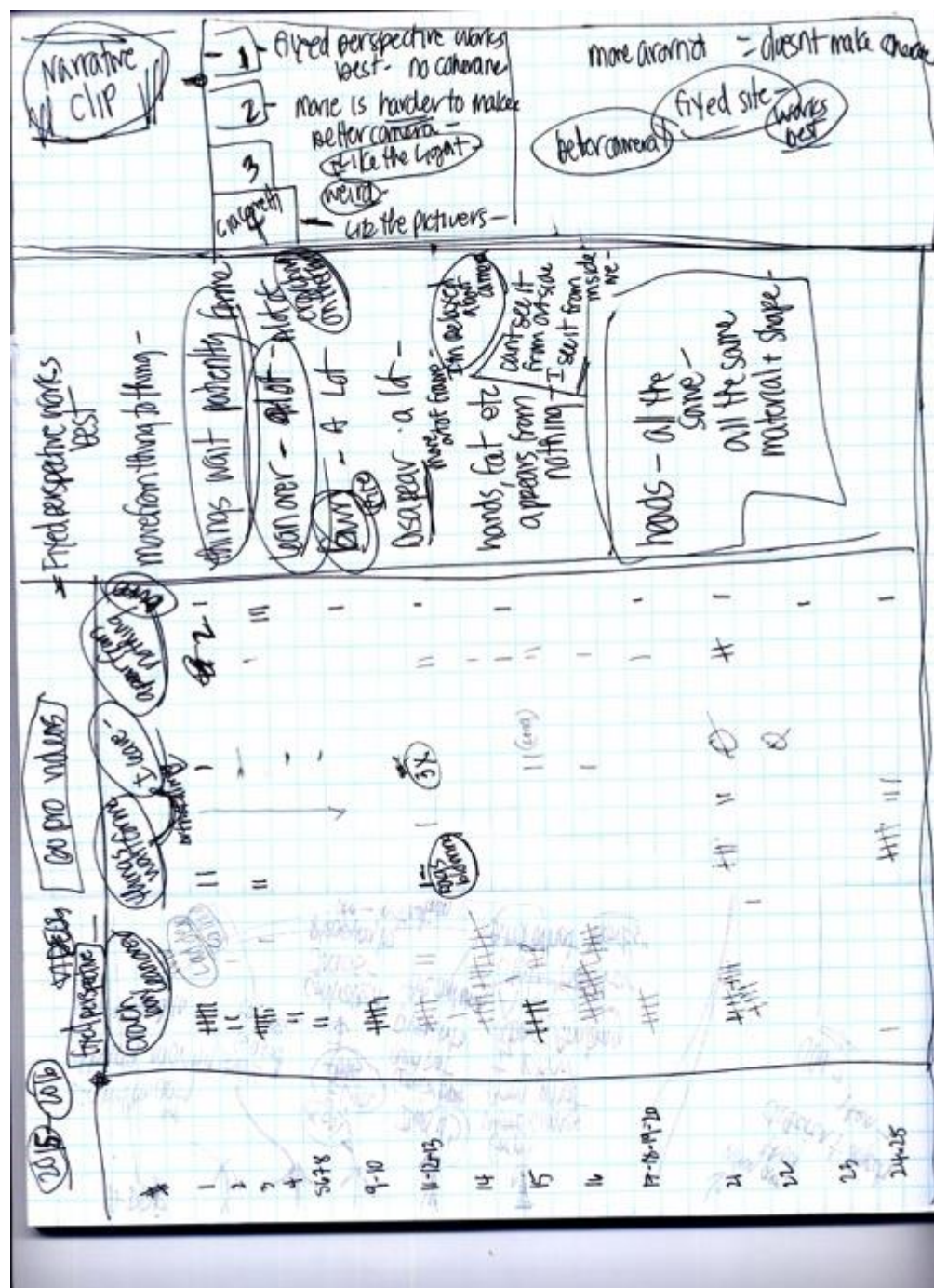
Memoing Example:

This is a *memo* from *The Conversations Project* that considered some of the ways that Michelangelo's statue of *David* was indicated by people with whom I documented conversations.

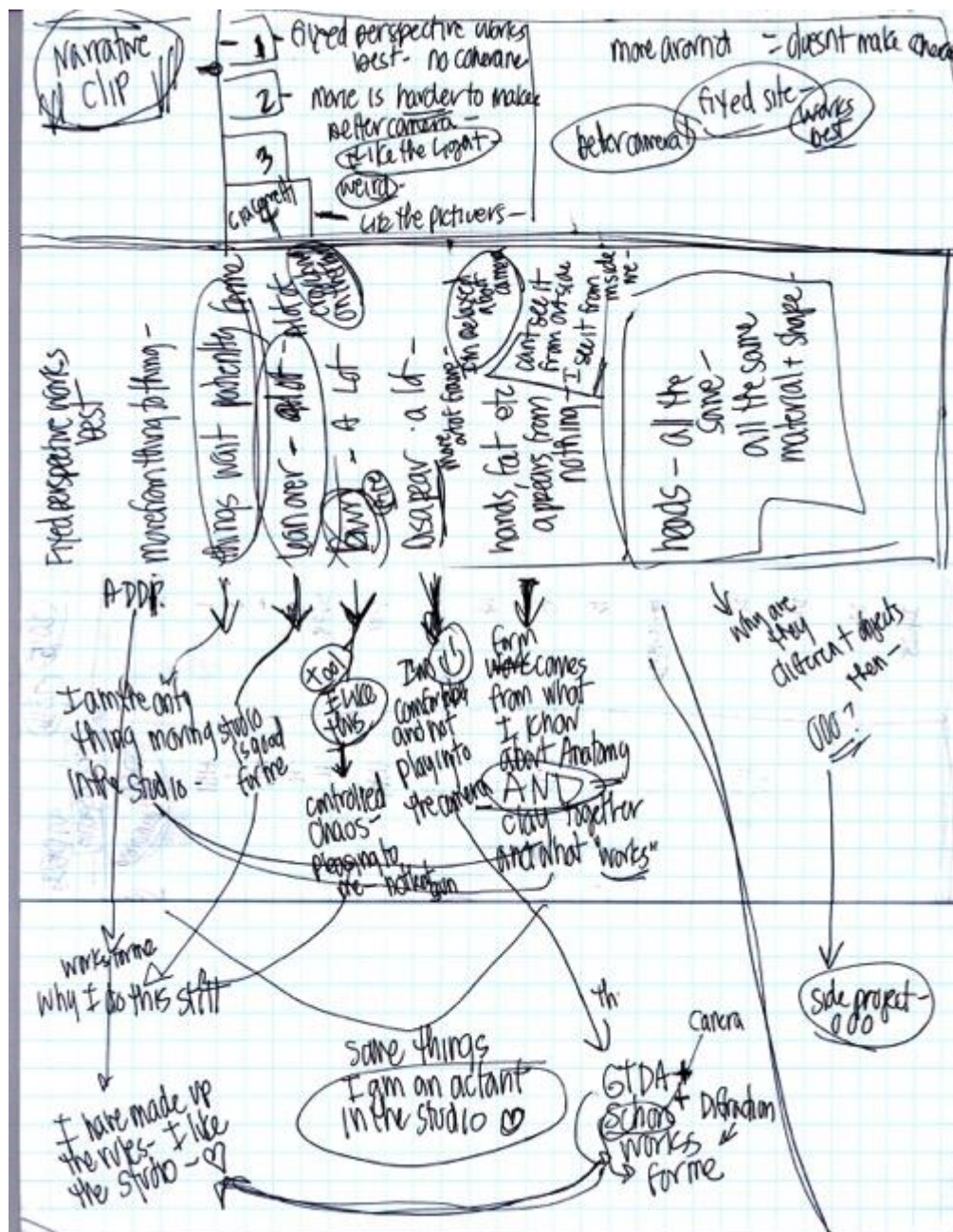


ii *GTDA The GoPro Project*

#1



#2



These pages show coding categories, memoing, and the two theories, one useful to this study and one quite personal: (I am an actant in the studio, the only moving thing, and that the studio is good for me which may explain why I like it) and how I came to *The Baby Head Project*.

Project structure:

Title: Photography as Performative Process Project:

Happiness lies neither in vice nor in virtue; but in the manner we appreciate the one and the other, and the choice we make pursuant to our individual organization. -Marquis de Sade

Question:

What role does the body play in the performative process of photographing a subject?

Project outline:

Shusterman describes somaesthetics as a discipline that emphasizes the role of the body in aesthetic appreciation.

Somaesthetics is a neologism combining soma- indicating the body and aesthetics.

Shusterman argues that the body has been marginalized or omitted in the conception of humanistic study. He argues that a meliorative reintegration of the body into philosophy is a necessary and required.

Based on Richard Shusterman's "Somaesthetic theory", his three branches of Somaesthetics, and his essay Photography as Performative Process, artist and model will collaborate and document both action and thought, in the role of the body of both photographer and model (Dynamic doing of artist vs passive undergoing of subject) in a series of photographic sessions.

Using the three aspects of Somaesthetics:

Analytic: What we read Foucault, Uses of Pleasure and Order of things; Shusterman, Photography as Performative Process and Thinking Through the Body: Educating For The Humanities; Barthes, Camera Lucida; Sade, Pragmatic: What we read about what exercises we do: Foucault, bio-power

Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

Practical: What exercises we do to photograph- (Shusterman never explicitly outlines or approves somatic disciplines) Exercises invented from Barthes, Foucault and Shusterman.

"In visual arts, somaesthetics has been used to explain not only how artists use their bodies in making artworks, but also how observers deploy themselves somatically to perceive such works." (TTB 9)

Problems:

Subject is self-conscious, uncomfortable in the way Barthes describes in Camera Lucida when he writes,

“Now, once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of “posing”, I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image.” (P10 CL)

The issue arises when the third eye of the camera is introduced.

Subject: LBOsborn

Desires to carry out photography project

Desires to understand the role of the body in a performative process

Willing to be photographed but does not desire to be photographed.

Artist: DTMaynor

Desires to photograph subject.

Desires to remove the influence of the camera on the subject.

Willing to investigate the role of the body in a performative process but does not desire to understand it. (Not particularly self conscious or caught in the fears of what photography does)

Desire didn't get the project anywhere. Desire is not enough.

The careful pursuit of pleasure, controlled is the solution.

How:

Solutions:

Foucault points out in Uses of Pleasure that,

“Nature intended that the performance of the act be associated with a pleasure, and it was this pleasure that gave rise to EPITHUMIA, to desire in a movement that was naturally directed toward what “gives pleasure” P43 Uses of pleasure

It is agreed that the desire to photograph or understand and the willingness to be photographed or assist in making the project happen was not enough to produce an agreeable experience of the

performative role of the body in the process of art making. An agreed on power/control and touch erotic component allowed the artist to remove or control the subject's "re making" of self in the photographic sessions. Artist desired to control subject's performance and remove the influence of the camera on the subject.

Desire:

Photograph

Knowledge

(All about Outcomes)

Pleasure:

Trust (=Rules)

Process (not outcome)

Nature intended that the performance of the act be associated with a pleasure, and it was this pleasure that gave rise to EPITHUMIA, to desire in a movement that was naturally directed toward what "gives pleasure" P43 Uses of pleasure

Object partners:

Active actors: carry out

Passive actors: carried out on. (47UoP)

Domain of pleasure

Following Shusterman's four point outline of his collaboration with Toma, this project will address: the role of artist and model will follow the same basic structure:

Setting: where to photograph and why.

Camera: it's effect on both artist and model.

Props: Transformative/ritual objects and their effect on the soma of both artist and subject

Performative process: Shared experience and somatic communication of making the photograph

The main points to be addressed in the journal will be the choosing the setting, addressing the use of ritual props, the effect of the camera on artist and subject, the bodily action and creative participation of both photographer and subject, and critique of resulting photograph(s).

:

Bodily action of photographer bodily action of subject;
Photographer's skill at gaining the confidence of the model:(p245)
dominant aims of photographing;

Subject must be willing.-Barthes quote(p247) {fears} must work toward being vitally and authentically present. (247)

Role of camera: role of photograph as an object (248)

Setting and pose: performative process. (different from gaining trust) Rules of performance- narrative we create. (posing and positioning are typically created without a formal script-P250){is this what we create??}

Setting:

Where to photograph

Place becomes mise-en-scene with the addition of the camera.(P.257) (document)

Props? (Shusterman's goldsuit)

Creative participation of model.

A series of exercises to perform in 3 sessions was devised based on two uncomfortable attempts at photographing and the agreed on readings. (see above)

Structure became very important in order for flow to happen; Time and specific activity was important:

Structure of 3 sessions:

Session 1:

X

X

X

X

Session 2:

X

X

X

X

Session 3

X

X

X

X scenarios each with a 15 minute time frame.

Foucault says we focus on the subject of desire rather than being the agent of pleasure.

Shusterman is caught in desire and not in pleasure-if he finds the pleasure in the gold suit, he needs to deal with that better.

The project will result in a journal of the sessions documenting the experiences of both subject and artist individually and in the collaboration(experiential flowP.250) leading up to and during the photographing session and work manifested through the pose.

(Performative process is ontologically complex and difficult to demarcate-P.250)

Approaching this project from a constructivist paradigm and using a relativist ontology, we decided to use interpretive and dialectic methodologies to collect and interpret data.

Knowing how rather than knowing what- reflective practice.

Research has historically been carried out by academic observers of the actions, not the artist. The practitioner is objectified. Unites research and practice.(VR22)

Most outstanding feature of a professional is the capacity for self evaluation. (VR23)

What characterizes your professional context? What is Best Practice in this context?

In what ways are you already a reflexive practitioner?

What problems could occur being a reflexive practitioner?

Brian Eno's challenge.(VR24)

Figures 40, 41, and 42

Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Photographs From *Photography As A Performative Process* Project, 2014

(Against Shusterman)

Draft: 2014

Against Shusterman: An exercise to articulate what has been gained from doing.

Richard Shusterman's primary project is somaesthetics, a neologism combining Soma, indicating the body and Aesthetics or Aesthesis (the ability to experience sensation or sensitivity), indicating what he describes as a discipline that emphasizes the role of the body in aesthetic appreciation.

Shusterman claims that

'since we live, act, and think through our bodies, their study, care, and improvement should be at the core of philosophy, especially when philosophy is conceived (as it used to be) as a distinctive way of life, a critical, disciplined care of the self that involves self-knowledge and self-cultivation' *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Shusterman, 2008, p.15).

He argues that the body has been marginalized or omitted in the conception of humanistic study and that a meliorative reintegration of the body into philosophy is a necessary and required.

Shusterman recounts the origins of his Somaesthetics as rooted in 'childhood raptures of radiant bodily charms and blissful somatic fulfillment' *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (Shusterman, 2012, p.ix) that left him "yearning for beauty" at a tender age. He further begins his essay, *Thinking through the body, educating for the humanities: a Plea for Somaesthetics*, with saying that the humanities relate to our human condition, and that our bodies are an "essential and valuable dimension of our humanity," (25TTB) and should be understood as such and that it is the "basic instrument of all human performance" (26TTB)

In *Body Consciousness*, Shusterman reprimands Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Dewey, Wittgenstein and James for devaluing the body in their philosophies. In *Thinking Through the Body* he discusses Somaesthetics in a variety of different situations from muscle memory, which focuses on how training in somatic awareness can meliorate the "somaesthetic pathologies of everyday life" to *Photography as a Performative Process*, which deals with the role of the body in the making of art. My interests are in the body and its role in aesthetics. Shusterman's ideas and arguments would seem valuable as an aid in further understanding and growing my conceptual engagement with the figure in my work. Having read *Thinking Through the Body* and *Body Consciousness* I find Shusterman to be a curiously constrained thinker. I will make an argument against using his work to inform my own by delving into both the chapter on Foucault, called *Somaesthetics and Care Of The Self: The Case of Foucault* from *Body Consciousness* and by designing and carrying out a project parallel to his *Photography As Performative Process* chapter in his book *Thinking Through The Body*. I will also further suggest that looking to cognitive scientists and philosophers who are engaged with

the recent discoveries in that field would serve my work and interests better.

In the essay *Somaesthetics and Care Of The Self: The Case of Foucault* from *Body Consciousness*, Shusterman begins by listing and objecting to charges leveled at Somaesthetics, which include “narrowness, sensualism, Hedonistic triviality, and a political narcissism. (19BC) He cites *Dialectic of Enlightenment* by Horkheimer and Adorno as the antithesis of Somaesthetics, because while it deals with the somatic- the beautiful body- it divides it from the mind. The beautiful body [becomes] the tool of capitalist ads and political repression. (27) Shusterman declares that, “They ignore the body’s subject-role as living locus of beautiful, felt experience.” (BC28)

Shusterman then outlines the three aspects of Somaesthetics: Analytic, Pragmatic, and Practical.

Analytic: Descriptive.

It is the research and theory that link thinking, the body and bodily practice. Foucault’s power theories come into play here, specifically his theory of bio-power.

“Studies show how the body is both shaped by power and employed as an instrument to maintain it, how bodily norms of health, skill, and beauty and even our categories of sex and gender are constructed to reflect and sustain social forces.” (23BC) Shusterman goes on to mention the role of embodiment in biological and cognitive sciences through the work of Alva Noe, Shaun Gallagher, George Lakoff and Antonio Damasio here to mention a few who also interest me.

In his essay *Photography as Performative Process*, Shusterman makes use of Foucault’s ideas of power and “of one’s own life as a personal work of art” and Barthes’ writing on “self-consciousness” in *Camera Lucida* in describing the analytic.

Pragmatic: Prescriptive.

Which focuses on the thinking and theories of the physical disciplines used to train and enhance or change the body. Pragmatic somaesthetic disciplines are sorted as either concerning an inner personal experience or external appearance to others. Feldenkrais¹ is experiential (for both practitioner and client) while plastic surgery is representational and external. Most subjects have both the inner and outer focus because “[h]ow we look influences how we feel, and vice versa.” (26BC) Shusterman mostly indicates what this should not be, suggesting Foucault’s “fixations on sexuality, transgression and sexual intensity” (40BC) are limiting. (While decrying most kinds of experimental or S/M sex, Shusterman does advocate a more body centric sex education claiming that the Kama Sutra and other choreographed acts are beneficial and promote health.) Shusterman puts forward meditation, workouts, and dance to be the kinds of physical training more worthy of discussion and practice.

practical: practice

"Intelligently disciplined practice" (BC29) -or doing-is neglected by philosophers. This is, of course the action or performance of the practice itself.

Oddly, Shusterman never explicitly outlines, sanctions or approves specific somatic disciplines to practice. He discusses Feldenkrais at length and is a practitioner as well as teaching/lecturing about dance.

At this point, Shusterman declares he will concentrate on the pragmatic somaesthetic in Foucault and not the analytic or practical aspects that are "powerfully present" in his work by saying that "the enticingly controversial details of his actual bodily practices" (30BC) or the fascinating analytical studies are not to be concentrated on. Somaesthetics as practiced by Foucault, implies Shusterman, is slightly off.

Here I find Shusterman's ramble desire to refute Foucault prudish. Through out this chapter, Shusterman seems disgusted by Foucault's interest in S/M and drugs and in his disgust misses the points Foucault makes about transgression, sex and power and manages to make his own brand of Somaesthetics seem prim and stuffy. Shusterman announces that S/M and drugs conflict with Foucault's goals of "the multiplication of somatic pleasures and forms of self-fashioning." (31BC) And puts forward that breathing, stretching, walking, yoga and dancing can "produce experiences of great power and exaltation." (37BC)

Shusterman goes on to say that "intensification of pleasure cannot be simply be achieved by intensity of sensation." (37BC) but quotes yogis and ascetics who achieve pleasure by rejecting it or "from and emptiness that reveals its own empowering intensity and fullness." He further suggests the feminine by suggesting that we should come to know pleasure in its more tender or gentler guises of "diversion" and "fun and so forth." (37BC) Here Shusterman has clearly missed modern feminist thinkers on sex, pleasure and desire like Elizabeth Grosz. Grosz says in her book "Space, Time and Perversion" that thinking of female desire in this diminished way "reduces female sexuality and genitality to the status of castration" and that in this way "Woman is man minus the phallus and its benefits." (STaP158)

Basically, Shusterman is finding Foucault an unrefined and hedonistic pervert but claims he won't demonized Foucault because he is a pervert. Shusterman will celebrate "bio power, gender construction, and somatically based social domination" (BC31) Just because he died from AIDS doesn't mean he is wrong . . . and he isn't just a "nihilistic French sophisticate" with a "jaded taste for narcotic, sexual perversion."

Foucault advocates for a desexualization of pleasure- Shusterman questions this if eroticism is not left out of the picture. First objection.

Foucault suggests the mix of "rules and openness" in S/M intensifies sexual relations- Rules and openness result in:

Novelty

Tension

Uncertainty

Every part of the body potentially gives pleasure

Shusterman doesn't like that Foucault wants the body to be sexy- He doesn't like the "narrow focus" of "intensifying the sexual act" and that the body is "reduced" becomes the sexual instrument. (33BC)

Shusterman doesn't like that body pleasure is sexualized.

Foucault: (Shusterman thinks he is a pervert)

Pragmatic:

Shusterman wants us to know his critique of Foucault is not 'a rejection of philosophy per se, but rather constitutes an affirmation of philosophy as critique' (31BC).

Shusterman will not tell us how problematic S/M and drugs are but he thinks they conflict with Foucault's goals of 'the multiplication of somatic pleasures and forms of self-fashioning' (31BC).

Foucault won't be *demonized* because he is a *pervert*. Shusterman will celebrate 'bio power, gender construction, and somatically based social domination' (BC31). Just because he (F) died from AIDS doesn't mean he is wrong . . . and he isn't just a 'nihilistic French sophisticate' with a 'jaded taste for narcotic, sexual perversion' (BC 32)

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Shusterman doesn't like that body pleasure is sexualized.

Shusterman objects to S/M sex because it is too masculine and violent. Says 'differently gendered subjectivities and desires' (34BC) could be equally as creative and 'gentler methods of sexual contact'

Asexual pleasures are not inconsistent with sexual delight . . . 35

Second objection is to Foucault's championing "intense delights" 36

Foucault says pleasure must be intense- Shusterman says Foucault has ANHEDONIA-

Shusterman says that for Foucault the everyday pleasures of food and drink are "meaningless" compared to the pleasures of transgressive sex and drugs. Shusterman suggests that breathing, stretching, walking, yoga and dancing can 'produce experiences of great power and exaltation' (37BC).

Shusterman randomly says that 'intensification of pleasure cannot be simply be achieved by intensity of sensation' (37BC). This SOUNDS true but he doesn't back it up.

Shusterman talks about pleasure but quotes only Yogis while saying Foucault, who experienced what he is discussing, needs a more refined logic of understanding refinement. Basically Shusterman is finding Foucault an unrefined and hedonistic pervert.

Anhedonia is the symptom of Foucault's excesses claims Shusterman. Anhedonia (linked to drug abuse and suicide)

I don't think he is using this word correctly. It seems to be more of a symptom of emptiness or mental illness. Is it Shusterman diagnosing Foucault? MS patients fatigue depression drugs. Have anhedonia. Is it so bad? Maybe if you can only get pleasure from yoga you should stick to yoga and heavy breathing. Just because Shusterman doesn't have the same feeling about S/M or drug use-which do have pitfalls- his inability to really see what Foucault is saying is curious. Because S thinks S/M is "heavy" and pervey and his feelings about drug use seem judgemental (does Shusterman drink?) his argument is just judgemental. Breathing deeply can get you to the same place as some negotiated power exchange eroticization of the body other than the genitals . . . ?? (Not in my world) Shusterman is missing the differences between desire and pleasure - and Foucaults focus on the differences and the idea of managing pleasure. Foucault argues that there is no theory of human pleasure, which is not as caught up in a "value" to be measured and is more open to variation and creative construction while there is much study and evaluation of desire and the supposed normative structures and laws that drive it in humans. Can Shusterman diagnose Foucault? Reward pathway stuff today

has changed the idea of pleasure- but Shusterman doesn't seem to see the differences. Power does not work by suppressing desire

"Our culture's constant lust for ever greater intensities of somatic stimulation in the quest for happiness is thus a recipe for increasing dissatisfaction and difficulty in achieving pleasure," because "all work and no play makes jack a dull boy" (BC39)

Shusterman points out his view on somasthetics "have in fact" been used to recommend strong mind altering drugs, though under carefully controlled circumstances. (39 footnote)

"Body-friendly philosophers" (40)

Addresses the idea of hedonism- Foucault was fixated on "sexuality, transgression and sensational intensity"(40) aesthetics can be ascetic...

Pleasure is important

Feeling good (pleasure) can make us more open to the world

Somatic pleasure is not localized. Tennis is pleasurable but not localized in one place in the body. If pleasure were merely blind sensation, you would feel it without playing tennis.

Transformational experiences. (Have to be spiritual or aesthetic)
Pleasure so intense it is painful to endure . . .(43) the aim here isn't sensual, so somehow it's better.

Somaesthetic s is not about pleasure-it is artful reshaping and sharpening- not simply for our own sensual satisfaction but so we are more aware of the needs of others. (Prude in bad relationship)

Not clear on pleasure... (44)

Shusterman ultimately seems to vaguely agree with Foucault by saying that Foucault's ideas of transformation In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault discusses how power is not suppression of desire but control of pleasures. "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere"(THoS93), it permeates and manifests as what is "true", "allowed" and "accepted" generally in society. This knowledge is then reinforced through social and political institutions and structures and become self-regulating through generally accepted behaviours and thinking. Foucault is suggesting this "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (THoS93)

Repression has always been the "fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality" (5) making the disruption of its hold difficult and potentially very costly. Foucault suggests that nothing less than full on transgression and contravention will result in "a reinstating of pleasure with in reality" (THoS5)

When trying to understand the relationship sex plays in power, it can be difficult to see, but by looking at repression, the space sex occupies is more easily defined. There is a power in speaking about sex as one must appear to make a "deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power;"(THoS6). This is like my work.....

Problems:

Conjecture:

Body should be included in on all philosophy- (BC16/17)

Should is used oddly in how we SHOULD look at the humanities and do (TTB25) they include the "Social Sciences which have pretensions to science" or SHOULD we focus on traditional methods and topics of high culture that give the humanities an authoritative aura of nobility, or should it extend to new and funkier forms.....

Somaesthetics make us have better lives ameliorative (TTB27)

Body divides us /contrast to stroke of genius (29TTB)

body sets limits(31TTB)

Confusius say (32TTB)

Shusterman says body is like a Woman- marry it (TTB36)

Bad habits arise from bad muscle memories 93ttb

Couples sides of beds-97 did he check this-?

Spaces strong somatic imprint 96TTB

Talks about artists and womens' delectable bodies on page (xBC)and (9TTB)

Need for academic approval:

TTB28) resistance to body focused learning-body has been rejected...

TTB1 intro-

Not flexible:

(104TTB) chronic raised shoulders are bad-how does he know this?

Body norms(TTB42-44) magical thinking-(bad way)

Process

Vision of knowledge-Teresa Bennett: How her embodied knowledge comes back and effects the body. She doesn't leave the body to have impact on the world. More acceptable way of having the body in the world.

Gender: Candy Darling stuff:

Shusterman doesn't identify with unshaven face or rolls of fat.... Candy darling stuff- He thinks candy was badly done . . .

(TTB246) Avedon/Danto/Hujar (A&E Naked Truth 270)

Gender: Foucault Sex is political Power Candy Darling quotes. Bio-power (143HS)

When studied and practiced with careful mindfulness and sensitivity as part of one's project of melioristic self-cultivation, the art of love making can bring rewarding . . .(TTB21)

Our Project

Gold suit video

Who I will use instead?

V S Ramachandan

Daniel Dennet?- (Zombie space)

Alva Noe

George Lakoff- Metaphor works in all this- understanding something through something else? Maps? Knowing about the thing but not the thing . . . ??

Shusterman is caught in desire and not in pleasure-if he finds the pleasure in the gold suit, he needs to deal with that better. (OMG!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv4m4GGLU5c>

I am not a genuine woman but I am not interested in genuineness. I am interested in the product of being a woman and how qualified I am.

I have always found socially unacceptable people make the best lovers because they are more sensitive.

I will not cease to be myself for foolish people. For foolish people make harsh judgements on me. You must always be yourself, no matter what the price. It is the highest form of morality.

-Candy Darling

Foucault may be equally revered and loathed It is really easy to despise Foucault for his personal investigations, but by their nature Foucault's investigations he pressed into areas not completely looked at before.

The transgressive nature of Foucault's investigations make him easy to criticize, but the fearless enthusiasm with which he looked beyond the "good and naughty", however biased by personal desires, makes his search seem to almost illustrate the Philosophy altering premise Shusterman hopes to advocate. Foucault's willingness to actually use his body to break with tradition and break through to seeing the world

"We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct." (AA69) we are reminded in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, "It's so easy to get way off track."

Penis pictures.

Tie in is same as candy darling

Elizabeth Grosz quote about women being a disempowered man.

Arnheim quote:

"Insignificant living is the worst possible enemy of art" 15?

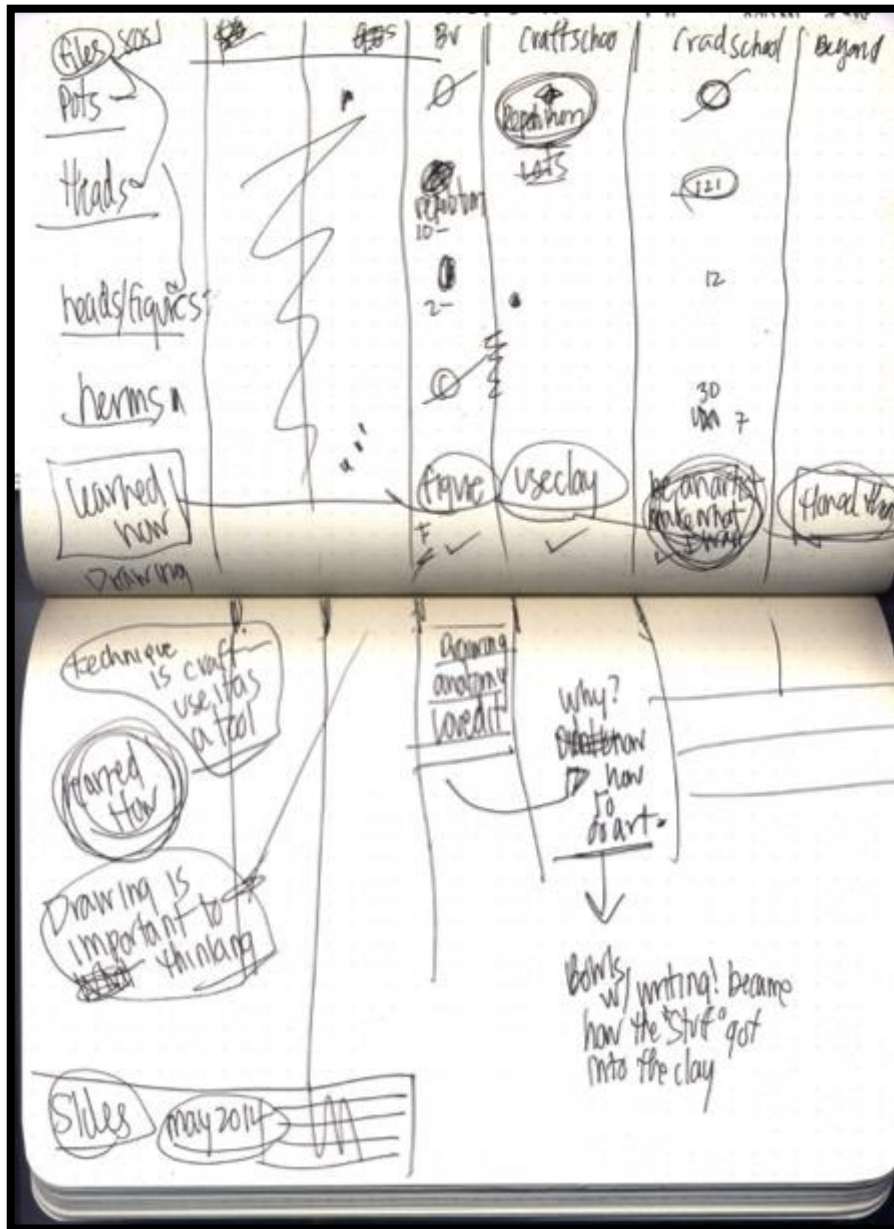
Where Shusterman was right:

Gold suit made him magic and was transformative. (and foolish) He found an external *something* that makes him able to operate in the construct of the project- that's the artist being clever.

Shusterman thought it was bad for Candy Darling to have a penis. Foucault says that was the important thing and transgressive thing. MY context is fru-fru old lady land. A penis isn't fru-fru old lady land. Penis is the prop to focus on. You aren't looking at me alone. Me in a context that works in my work.

iv A memoing example for *The Slides Project*.

I began with dates but quickly moved to the different institutions where I had gained skills as the initial method for coding this project. Here, I also became aware that I use technique, or craft as a tool, rather than as the standard for my work to meet.



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Re: Other

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Subject: Re: Other
Date: Thu, Apr 19, 2018 9:50 am

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-----Original Message-----

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1/2

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Subject: AW: Permission to use images **Date:** Tue, Apr 24, 2018 5:18 am

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Von: lbosborn@aol.com [mailto:lbosborn@aol.com] **Gesendet:** Donnerstag, 19. April 2018 17:44 **An:** sung@ernst-scheidegger-archiv.org **Betreff:** Re: Permission to use images

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Olivia Baeriswyl

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Von: lbosborn@aol.com [mailto:lbosborn@aol.com] **Gesendet:** Samstag, 14. April 2018 03:57 **An:** sung@ernst-scheidegger-archiv.org **Betreff:** Permission to use images

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The images I would like permission to use are:

Traces of his sculpting with plaster

Paris 1960

Giacometti working on the plaster sculpture for "L'homme qui marche" ("The Walking Man")

Paris 1958

Thank you,

Lisa Osborn

PO Box 39 Avery Island, LA 70513

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